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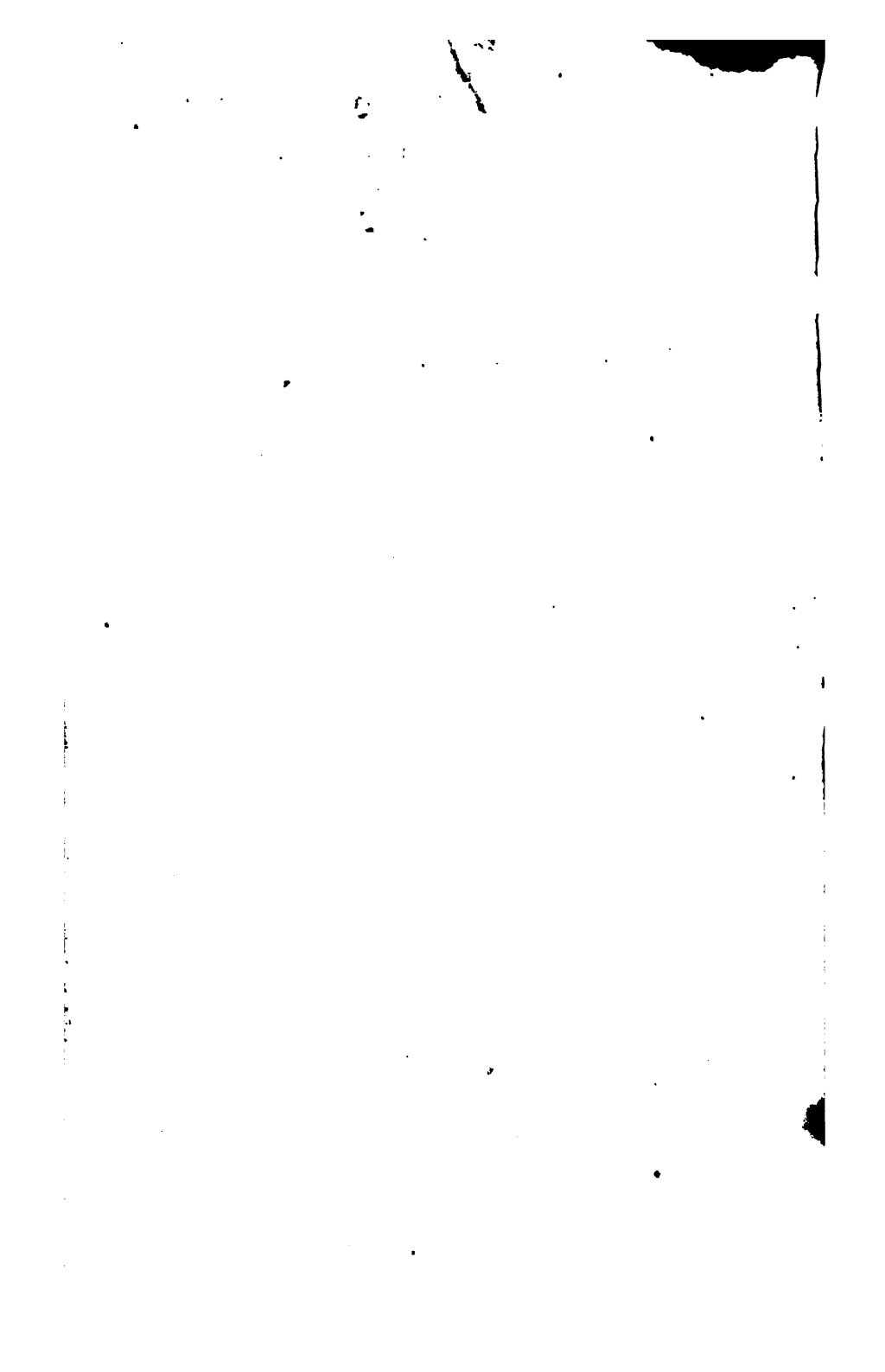
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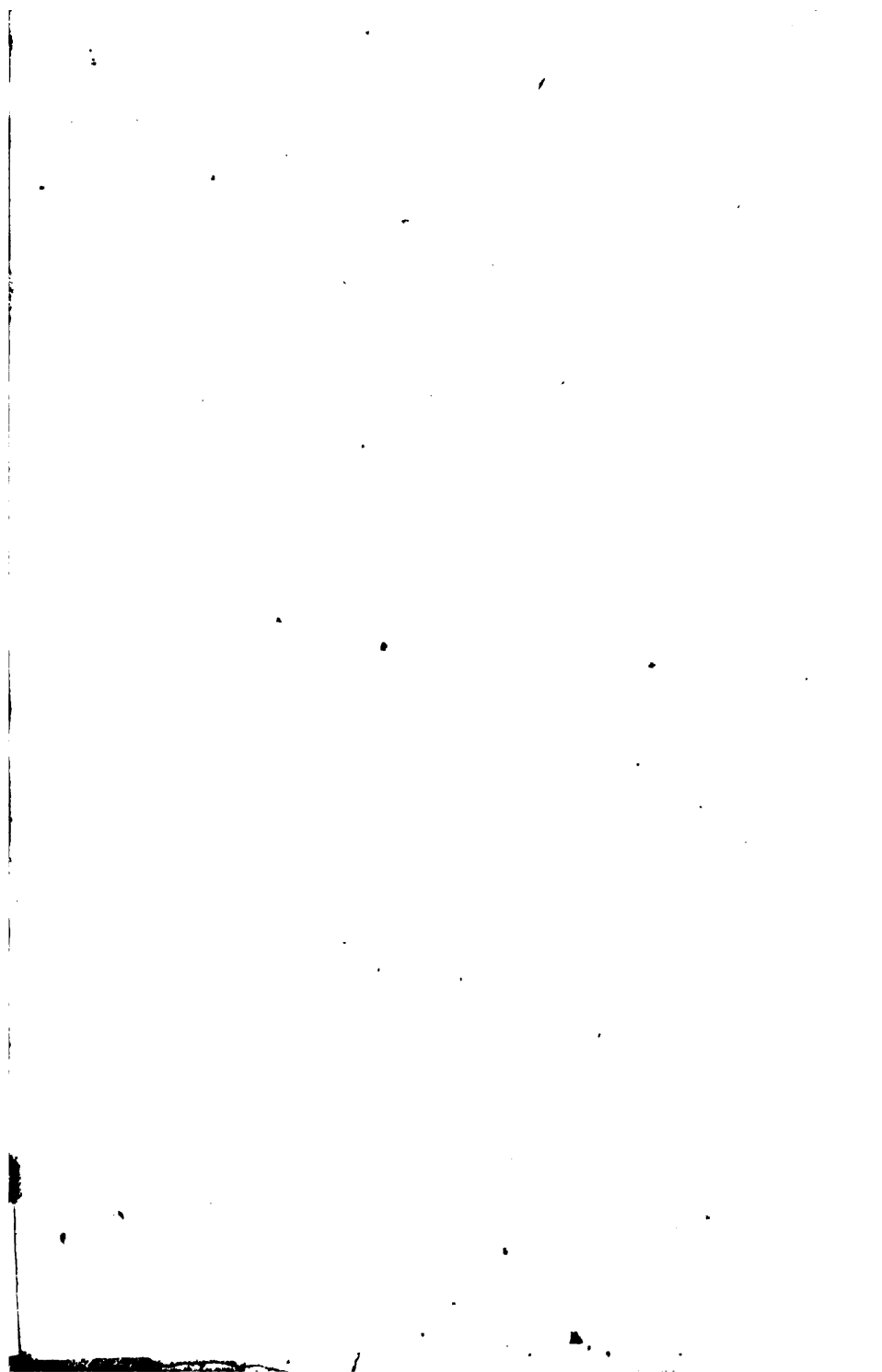
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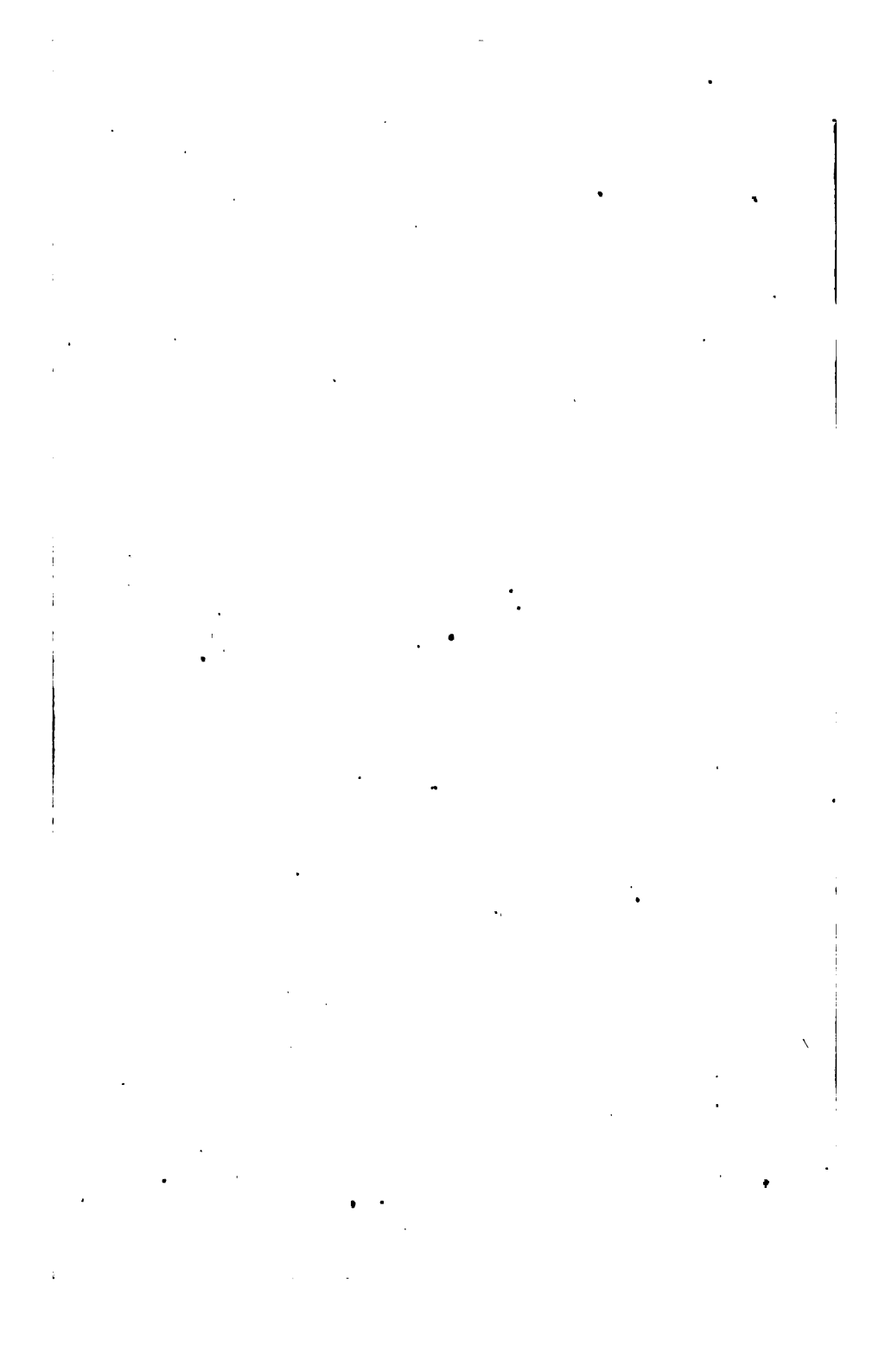
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DISCOURSES

ON THE

COVENANT OF WORKS,

THE

FALL OF MAN,

AND

ORIGINAL SIN.

BY WILLIAM LUSK,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE, N. Y.

There is no fact, or truth in the Bible, which was designed to be a
subject *merely* of speculative regard.

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ANALYSIS OF THE WORK.

COVENANT OF WORKS.

DISCOURSE I.

DOCTRINE explained. The parties, and the condition of the Covenant considered.

Genesis ii. 16, 17—And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

DISCOURSE II.

The penalty of the Covenant particularly exhibited.

Genesis ii. 16, 17—And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

DISCOURSE III.

The promise of the Covenant established. Its ratification by a symbol. The previous argument improved, in regard to the advantages of the Covenant, and the representative character of the first man.

Genesis ii. 16, 17—And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. *Genesis* iii. 22 —lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.

11-25-31/2nd

THE FALL OF MAN

DISCOURSE VI.

The subject discussed inferentially. Particularly with

a view to the refutation of prevailing errors inconsistent with the doctrine advanced. Conclusion. John iii. 6.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

DISCOURSE VII.

The subject discussed inferentially. Particularly with

OF DEPRAVITY.

DISCOURSE VIII.

The subject discussed inferentially. Particularly with

a view to the refutation of prevailing errors inconsistent with the doctrine advanced. Conclusion. John iii. 6.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

DISCOURSE IX.

The subject discussed inferentially. Particularly with

a view to the refutation of prevailing errors inconsistent with the doctrine advanced. Conclusion. John iii. 6.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

OF DEPRAVITY.

DISCOURSE X.

The subject discussed inferentially. Particularly with

a view to the refutation of prevailing errors inconsistent with the doctrine advanced. Conclusion. John iii. 6.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

DISCOURSE XI.

The subject discussed inferentially. Particularly with

a view to the refutation of prevailing errors inconsistent with the doctrine advanced. Conclusion. John iii. 6.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE argument of the following discourses is drawn up, under a deep sense of the difficulty attending a satisfactory production ; and that arising, not merely from the state of theological opinion, but also, the extreme delicacy attending some points of argument, embraced in a complete view of the subject. Yet, great as the difficulty is, and to some minds, as disheartening as the attempt, I am fully convinced that a work of this nature is greatly needed : and am confirmed in the impression, not only by the wants of my own flock, and their expressed wishes in regard to it, but also, by the opinions of able men, and professors of theology in our country, with whom I have freely communicated. In a just view of the *design*, I am strongly assured, that a work of this character, comprising what is valuable on the topics it embraces ; excluding from it what is foreign and local ; and embodying a pointed, clear exposition and defence of the doctrine inculcated, cannot be an unacceptable offering to the public. Whether I have achieved the object in view, I am deeply aware, is for others to judge. With regard to myself, I can only say, if any other one would have performed the same task, I should most willingly have resigned my charge to his disposal. But having consented to the publication of this work, it is fit to acknowledge, that my best wishes are answered, if the reasoning embraced in it be satisfactory in the main ; and if, in other respects, I escape

a charge so justly made by many, as connected with ephemeral notices on the same points, of prying into things which are unrevealed, and apparently at least, darkening the counsel of the Most High, by the reveries of a "vain and deceitful" philosophy.

But while in the present design, I will keep within the sphere of legitimate information, I am admonished that the subject of inquiry is one of a fertile nature. Taken as a whole, it is well denominated the disease—the *ruined state of man*! And viewed as concerned with the relations between man and the spiritual creation, it is one of inexhaustible import; and must lie at the bottom, not merely of what is now agitated in our land, but of all correct, spiritual understanding of the scriptures. A fact, of which I am so deeply apprised, that in a thorough investigation, I resolved, treating professedly of the disease, to restrict my remarks mainly to *that* thing: and with respect to the remedy, particularly the disputed ground on which it is administered, I considered it ill advised to mingle with it much of what is freely and warmly contested.

I remark that this work treats particularly of the *disease*. It conveys a sensation to my heart of painful interest, as connected with the manner in which subjects of this nature are treated by many people. I regard not so much the peculiar garb, in which they stand forth in religious periodicals, or even the *Germanizing* character of some preaching among us, though it savors little enough of Christ-like simplicity, but rather a certain *morbid appetite*, by which some, who profess even a "form of sound words," are indisposed to candid inquiry. The case of such, I think, is much to be lamented.

They are instantly alarmed if any thing is offered concerning our lost estate, as though we were obstinately bent, notwithstanding we ever assert his moral *capacity*, of abasing man below the infinite demerit of his own folly. A posture of things that clearly subjects them to a double condemnation. For while they are inconsistent with their professed faith, it is plain that they overlook the grand point, without which, there can be no just impression of the remedy ; and in the consequence of it, become foolishly averse to any thing, which could awaken a holy zeal in their hearts, or convey to the intellect a new apprehension upon a theme of unrivalled solemnity.

Yet, whatever is proposed for the regard of the reader, if founded in scripture, will challenge a respect ; and by the judgment there passed, if it describe our state sufficiently, we must all abide, if its judgment be supposed to be according to truth. Impressed myself with that conviction, I resolved, that the evidence of the work should rest on a close exposition of the inspired volume. A course, of which the propriety is evident ; and not only in this instance, but generally so, where topics are discussed, which are certainly a matter of inspired asseveration.

If that be allowed in regard to their character, it is manifest, not only as the word of God is an infallible guide to us, but as the views cherished of one part will exert an influence on the understanding in regard to the whole system of revealed truth. An intimation of which is given us by our gracious Master, when referring to a certain sect among the Jews, he spake of their doctrine, making it truly of the *nature* of heaven ; and

advised his disciples to beware of it, lest a spice of error in its influence on the mind, should beguile them away from the simplicity of sanctified attainments.

At the same time, while a primary regard is due to the oracles of divine truth, I designed however in this attempt to pay *some* regard to the opinions of the devout and excellent of the earth. To the concurrent testimony of those who have agreed essentially in the faith inculcated ; especially, to the doctrine asserted in the various standards of the Protestant Reformed Church. For the sense entertained by other persuasions is always a desirable fact, with those who respect the character of their fellow servants and companions in the school of the same Lord.*

* Of the standards or confessions of the reformed churches, on points of doctrine, I shall cite the following : Those of Augsburg, the Second Helvetic, the French, Articles of the Church of England, the Belgic, the Bohemian or Waldenses, Articles of Dort, the Westminster and the Savoy Confessions. And some historical notice of them I add here, taken from a harmony of Confessions recently published in Utica, in connexion with the Acts of the Synod of Dort.

I. THE AUGSBURG.

"This confession was drawn up at the suggestion of the protestant princes, by Melancthon, under the direction of Luther ; and was presented to the Emperor, Charles V., at the Diet of Augsburg, in the year 1530. It has been generally received and adopted as the confession of faith of all the Lutheran Churches in Europe and America."

II. THE SECOND HELVETIC.

"The first Helvetic confession was framed at the requisition of the rulers and Senate of Basil, by the delegates of the Helvetic States, which had embraced the evangelical doctrine, in the year 1536, and was sent and presented to the assembly of Divines at Wertemberg, by Bucer and Capito. But when the first confession was too short it was written over and enlarged in 1566 by the Pastors of Zurich, and was approved and subscribed unto, not only by the Tigurines, (i. e. the

With this declaration of my purpose, I close these suggestions with intimating : That the *argument* of the work agrees substantially with the following authors : Witsius, De Moor on Mark, Turretine ; A. Gibs Boston and Colquhoun on the Covenant of Works ; Edwards on Original Sin, Marrow of Modern Divinity, Bates, Brown, Ridgley, Toplady, Berry-street Sermons,

Canton of Zurich) but by their confederates of Bern, and Schaffhausen ; and Sangallia, Rhetia, Myllhausia, and Bienna, of the Grison league ; and by the churches of Geneva, of Savoy, of Polonie, of Hungary, and of Scotland."

III. THE FRENCH.

"It was drawn up and adopted by a Synod held in Paris in 1559, and presented to Francis II, King of France, in behalf of all his protestant subjects."

IV. ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

"They were agreed upon by the Arch-bishops, Bishops and Clergy, of England and Ireland, in the convocation holden at London, in the year 1562, for the avoiding diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion. They, 39 in all, were also established by a convocation of the bishops, clergy, and laity, as the articles of faith, of the *Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. States*, in the year 1801."

V. THE BELGIC.

"This confession was first published in the French language, in the year 1563, in the name of all the churches of Belgia ; and was confirmed and adopted by the Synod of their churches in 1579, and rendered and published in the Dutch language. The confession and catechism of the Belgic churches, and the canons of Dort, have been adopted as the faith of the reformed churches of the Netherlands. And these again have been received and adopted in this country, as the confession of faith of the American "*Reformed Protestant Dutch Church*."

VI. THE BOHEMIAN, OR WALDENSES.

"This was drawn up in the year 1573, and was highly approved by Luther Melancthon, and the whole university of Wirtemberg."

Lime-street Lectures, Fisher's and Westminster Catechisms.

Works of the above stamp have not only been thoroughly examined, but what is valuable in them I have hoped to retain. And though some may dissent, in whose hands this small edition may come, from our sense of imputation, or the character which we give to the various evils by which we are assailed in the present world, (yet in this day of divine rebuke, we should beware how we touch on these awful topics,) it is thought, however, if they are sound on the point of *native depravity*, that the work may not be on the whole less acceptable ; but that the effect of it will be to stir

VII. THE ARTICLES OF DORT.

"They were drawn up by a Synod convened at Dordricht, or Dort; at which, many theologians of the Reformed Churches of Great Britain, Germany and France, were present. It sat in the years of our Lord 1618, 1619.

VIII. THE WESTMINSTER.

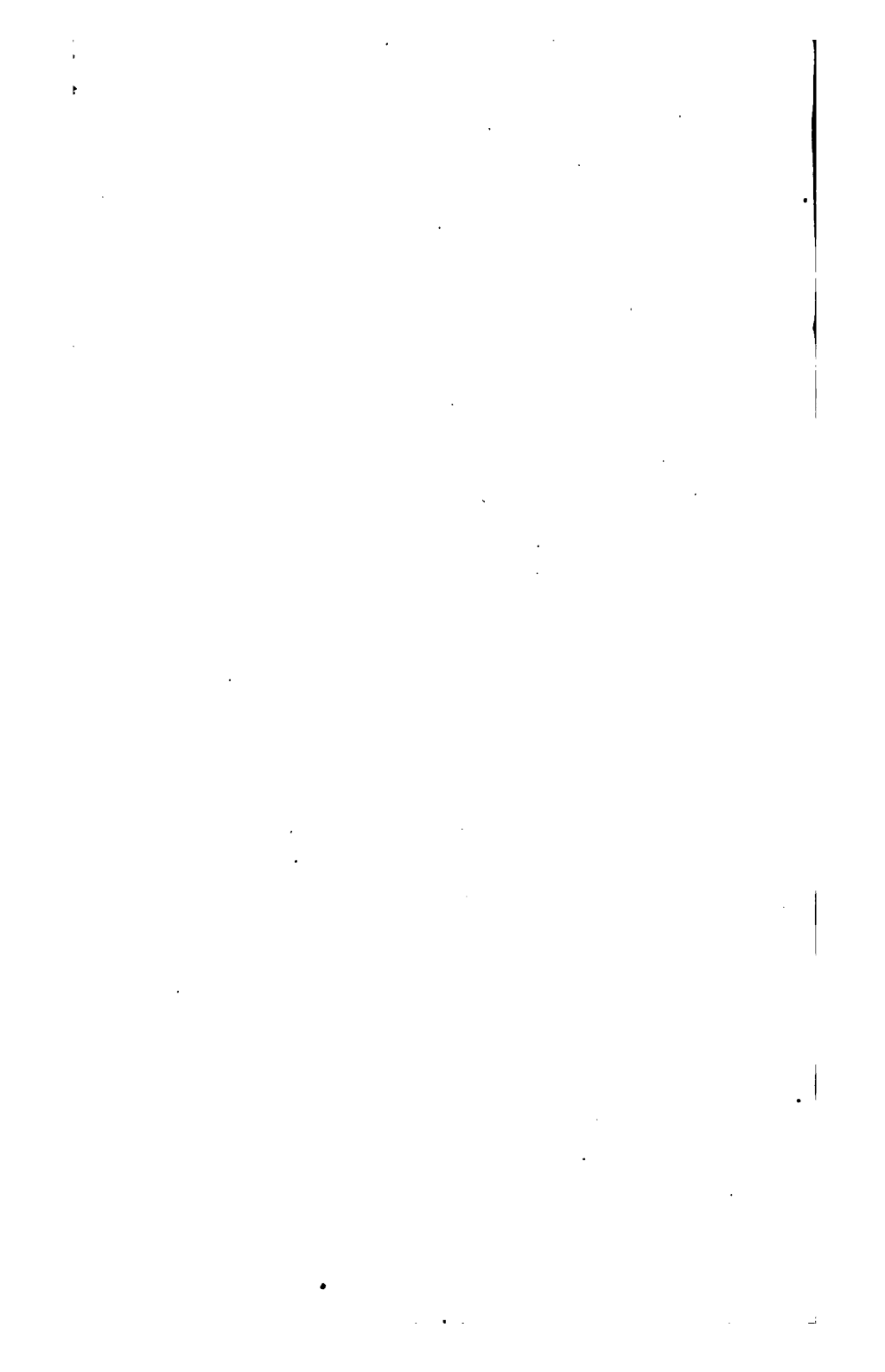
"This was drawn up by an assembly of divines convened by an act of Parliament, 1643. It was approved by the general assembly of the Church of Scotland, and ratified by an act of parliament in the year 1645.—Was acknowledged as the confession of faith of the New-England Churches, by the Synod of Cambridge, in Massachusetts, 1648. And has been adopted as the confession of faith of the General Assembly, the Burgher, Anti-Burgher, Covenanter, and Associate Reformed Presbyterians in this country."

IX. THE SAVOY.

"This confession is a declaration of the faith and order, adopted in the congregational churches in England, consented unto by the elders and messengers in their meeting at the Savoy, (London,) in 1658. Was approved by a Synod at Boston, 1680, of the elders and messengers of the congregational churches of Massachusetts. And was owned and consented unto by the elders and messengers of the churches in Connecticut, assembled at Saybrook in the year 1708."

up a spirit of inquiry ; to explain and conciliate, rather than disturb ; and especially, to foster those views of our state by nature, which in the glorious work of God in this place, and more or less through the country, have been blessed to the eternal good of many souls " dead in trespasses and sins."

That this, under the Divine blessing, may ever be the case, not only with my own people, whose assiduity in listening to these discourses I do most fervently reciprocate, but as connected with the spiritual advancement of any who shall hereafter make them a subject of particular contemplation, is the devout wish and prayer of the Author.



COVENANT OF WORKS.

DISCOURSE I.

Genesis ii. 16, 17—And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

THAT God in the creation of the world purposed to glorify himself, is a point very cordially embraced ; and by those who differ in the mode of securing the object while they admit the fact, is not only adopted, but is made the basis of all evidence in regard to the administration of the universe.

If the proposition however be true, its bearing upon our guilty race, the creation of the first man, and design of God in making him a moral agent, may be easily discerned. In connexion with the situation of mankind, this doubtless is apparent. Had the earth only been created, and no intelligent being placed in it, no medium had existed of displaying God's moral attributes in this part of the empire ; and his main purpose in regard to that device must have seemingly failed. But forming Adam a responsible agent, and, as the head of his species, impressing on him his glorious image, he endowed him at once with those attributes of which his nature was susceptible ; and over the work of his own hand, in a state of primeval purity, pronounced the example of his wonderworking power to be incomparably *good*.

But that particular likeness to the Author of good,

making him an object of peculiar care, is immeasurably important. The nature of it we shall not expatiate on at present. It was such, however, as laid a foundation of rational and endearing intercourse between man, and the Eternal Source of being and happiness. It was such as became in the same instance, and that adorned his state, the sweetly attuned relations of lawgiver and subject, of a parent and child. And in regard to the first man, as a fit medium of exhibiting the divine perfection, and with that view, an object of tender regard no less than absolute control, we shall consider it in one connexion ; or regard that semblance, as issuing in an understanding between him and the Father of spiritual agents, that in our apprehension may deserve the name of a *covenant*.

Whether the transaction referred to, however, should retain the customary appellation, I think, will fully appear from what may be offered to your notice : from what is made a subject hereafter of distinct contemplation, that respects the design of any covenant. And if it appear well founded in the historical writings of Moses, to say no less, will be deemed important under a *variety* of aspect ; as it may serve not only to explain the constitution under which Adam was placed, but it may shed some light on the wisdom of the divine dispensations generally, by which happiness is dispensed to our race, as we imagine, whether before or after the apostacy, on the same general principle ; and any portion of human felicity is suitably derived, only from federal stipulations, dictated by a God, that *keepeth covenant and mercy with them that fear him*.

But whatever is proved in regard to the subject of future examination, or any position that may be adopt-

ed, it is fit to remark in the onset, that some obscurity may rest on the apprehension of people, in a narrow inspection, from the use of the word covenant in the sacred scriptures.

The reason of this may be easily detected. It arises observably from the circumstance, that the *name* is taken by the sacred penmen in a more undefined sense than we adopt it in this relation. As you will certainly discover, it is frequently used by them in a *broader* acceptation: is made, that is, to signify, not the terms of a covenant, strictly speaking, but what is very true, to import simply, or, on a large scale, any divine plan of operation, *constitution, establishment or mode of proceeding*. In this sense you may be aware, that it is used unquestionably in regard to the *material world*; and in reference to things, which, on their own part, cannot properly assume the stipulations of an engagement. An example of its use may be taken from the following. It is declared then in a final settlement with Noah, that God entered into covenant with him, and with his seed after him, yea, and with the *fowl*, the *cattle*, and *every beast* of the earth; that all flesh should not be cut off any more by the waters of a flood, that there should not be any more *a flood to destroy the earth*.* I can name also, an example in point, where God is allowed to have made a covenant with the *day and night*; and in virtue of which, they succeed each other in the manner that is experienced in the vicissitudes of time.† But this, I apprehend, will answer the end of an example. And while it appears altogether unnecessary, that a mist should be thrown over the subject by a particular use

* Genesis ix. 9, 10 11.

† Jeremiah xxxiii. 25.

of the term, though appearing in Scripture, as it no way affects my present purpose, I may add, that we should derive from it perhaps a very important intimation, viz., that the propriety of the name in the very cases I quote appears to be taken primarily from the *security*, pertaining to the mutual relations and formal notion of the covenant in a more limited signification.

This being premised, it shall be my object in what I may propose for regard, *first*, to explain the doctrine I shall maintain in your hearing, viz. : that in the primeval state of Adam, GOD ENTERED INTO A COVENANT WITH HIM, WHICH IS COMMONLY DENOMINATED THE COVENANT OF WORKS. And this attempted, it is my purpose to consider in order :

1. The parties of this covenant.
2. Its condition.
3. Its sanction. And,
4. The promise of the covenant, together with its ratification by an admirable provision of the Author.

In compliance then with the plan announced, I shall explain, *first*, the sentiment I have espoused ; or give an outline of the view entertained of it, in order that you may appreciate better what is advanced on every head inviting your serious regard.

In fulfilling this desirable purpose, I remark then in general, that so far as the Bible may teach any thing whatever, it warrants us in the belief of a principle lying at the bottom of all correct views of divine things. It is this : That in the plan of Jehovah's government, it is his avowed purpose, that every accountable being in the universe be placed originally in a state of trial. That all be tried on a basis of natural requirement, or if you please, pass through a *legal probation*. And as a

consequence of said trial, or probation, it appears as agreeable to reason, as to the inspired record itself, that the future happiness or misery of any dependent creature, be made to hang decisively on the meritorious character he sustains.

This was the case no doubt in regard to the angelic creation; not only them that sinned, but those who abode in primitive purity and zeal, and who, in a proper regard to a test of moral duty, by the impartial Jehovah, are certainly confirmed in a state of peace and happiness forever.

And this we conceive on the authority of the scriptures was the case with Adam. He had certainly a *trial*. And speaking of it in a bare outline of the fact, we may call to mind that in a proper sense his natural condition was that precisely: I say his *state*, as born under the necessary dominion of the Eternal, and from the nature of the relation subsisting between them, expected to render the Being that made him a suitable homage. A principle indeed not unfrequently overlooked; but if correct, of the greatest importance. And its bearing is palpable. For whatever be said of the covenant in question by those who can hardly endure the name of it, they have yet a serious matter to dispose of apart from any thing of the nature designed.

But to render the natural condition of man more apparent, I remark, that you must view him at the creation, as made under a law requiring of him what the covenant of works is said to have done, viz., perfect and unerring obedience: just what the relation subsisting between man and his Maker makes indispensably needful. And with regard to the law itself, viewed as embraced strictly in the precept of it, and more especially, as laid on a

mutable being it had a penalty meantime virtually annexed to it. And whatever was implied in the penalty, no doubt, the same wrath essentially which is denounced against the least aberration by the decalogue, would have impended on any departure from its claims.

To appreciate the condition of Adam therefore in the circumstances described, the covenant of works being left out of view, you must conceive of him as undergoing a sort of probation *perpetually*. The terms of which were plainly this: That while he obeyed the law of God exactly, or maintained inviolable the purity of his nature, he should not only be exempt from a threatened curse, but at the same time, retain a gladsome sense of his Maker's favor. In regard however to the latter point, or the enjoyment arising from free communion with the Father of mercies, be it well digested, that he had no certainty of any thing, except for the time being: be his obedience what it may, only for the passing moment. And while this must be admitted, in regard to the imagined state of our forefather, I may add, that the *degree* of his enjoyment had been surely incomplete. For humanly speaking, he must be ever liable to apostacy; and even while retaining his integrity, to be harassed, perhaps, by the bitterest temptations of Satan. And with the thought ever recurring to him, as I can well imagine, that he might lose all he had delighted in, and sink away eternally, as one has observed in relation to it, had his obedience held out for any assignable period, the good he should have certainly derived from it, had been little more than simple immortality.

Now in this state of things, and as I think too, of dreadful uncertainty, comes in our perception the covenant of works: or, understanding entered into between

God and a dependent creature, in virtue of which, and on the ground of obedience of the nature just named, our first parent in a limited trial, acting on the behalf of himself and his own offspring, might attain the prize of everlasting life. I call this understanding or agreement a covenant. The idea is perfectly natural. In respect to the substance of any covenant whatever, it had the parts of it in the most simple form, viz., a *condition* and a *promise*: the condition to be performed by one party, and the promise to be made out or made good by the other, when the fulfilment of that condition had actually taken place. And in the case before us, I will only intimate, that the obligation of the deed was urged authoritatively by a sanction; or, in respect to man, and especially his mutable state, by the terrors of penal anguish; or the divine threatening against every departure from duty, of which in due time I shall speak with more particularity.

In explaining my view, therefore, of the doctrine I will assert, you must perceive the advantage of this covenant to lie immediately in one point—a very desirable end, viz., that in virtue of obedience, Adam could possess not merely happiness in connexion with innocence, but as the reward of *fidelity* too, the possession of everlasting life. After a limited period, on remaining steadfast, he might be confirmed in the unchangeable tokens of his Maker's beneficence and care. And not only in my apprehension had he been confirmed in a holy life through a boundless existence, but what is worthy of regard, that life had been crowned with blessings more important than could have been obtained on any other scheme; more extensive, than could have been insured, even by unintermitted compliance in a state

of endless probation. For in respect to this covenant, it is judged a very fair presentiment, that a great deal of grace was really expressed in it. And the reason is not remote from the weakest apprehension. As all admit, that the reward of eternal life on any plan must be an act of pure condescension, bearing no comparison whatever with the desert of man, there is no sound objection to the thought. And I can suppose that God would have rewarded Adam, not merely with eternal life, but in his holy prerogative, have crowned that life with inexpressible kindness. That he had done it in fact, with the liberality of a prince. And in the covenant under which our first parent was placed, it was the avowed purpose of the Creator, not only to display some evidence of kind regard, but in the free disposal of his own gifts and grace, to exhibit to created intelligences a paramount regard to his adorable Sovereignty.

This is the sense we entertain of what is familiarly styled the covenant of works. Not unfrequently, and for reasons that are apparent, a covenant of *friendship*, of *life*, of *innocency* and the like.* And having report-

* The name by which this act, or understanding is designated is comparatively unimportant. Yet the propriety of retaining the name it commonly bears, is seen from other parts of scripture. For example, the *law of works*, as opposed by Paul to the *law of faith*, is the very same thing, i. e. the law of Heaven in a *covenant form*.* For as opposed in any sense, it is merely as a *way of life*; being viewed in regard to our acceptance with God, as the primary and natural method of obtaining it, while that through faith in Christ is truly secondary and supervenient. Agreeing with which, it is said in Galatians: "*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.*"† But how shall we consider that? That all who are bound to obey the divine law, merely as a rule of life, are certainly damned for that very reason? Ah, no. Then surely were it vain to put any creature upon trial. From

* Romans iii. 27. † Galatians iii. 10.

ed briefly the view entertained of its nature, I shall go on, as proposed, to consider in detail the parts and attributes of the covenant introduced for your particular consideration.

1. First. I call your attention, as intimated, to the individuals who constitute properly the *parties* of this covenant.

With respect to the contracting agents, they are respectively God and the first man he created, assigning him a place on the rolling element we inhabit. On the one part, it is the self-existent One; the eternal and transcendentally glorious Jehovah. On the other, a finite creature whom he had just formed, and made a subject of his moral and tenderest regard. And such being the

all which, it appears, that the law is here viewed, *simply*, as a federal means of securing an interest in God's favor, and a title to a prospective felicity hereafter. With the above, compare another declaration of Paul respecting *believers*, saying, *For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law but under grace.*† And if the reader please, the enlightning remarks of Fraser on the same passage, in his forcible exposition and paraphrase of the 6th and 7th chapters of the epistle to the Romans.

From the Harmony of Confessions referred to in a previous note, I extract merely the following :

THE LATTER CONFESSION OF HELVETIA.

"Man was from the beginning created of God after his image, in righteousness and true holiness, good and upright : but by the instinct of the serpent and his own fault, falling from goodness and uprightness, became subject to sin, death, and divers calamities ; and such an one as he became by his fall, such are all his *offspring*, even subject to sin, death and sundry calamities."

CONFESSION OF BOHEMIA, OR THE WALDENSES.

"Man being placed in this estate, had left unto him free will, so that if he would, he was able to fulfil that commandment which God gave.

†Romans vi. 14.

parties, if a question arise in your hearts, whether they were able to enter into a covenant with each other—I answer, truly. Without any mistake they were prepared for it: unless it can be shown there is something in the nature of the covenant at war with the sovereignty of God, or the moral liberty of his dependent creature man; or again, if any difficulty of the sort arise, something perhaps, that is unjust in the very *stipulations* of the covenant to which I allude. And to shew that either point may be fully disposed of, and no serious difficulty arise from ought that appears, I remark, *first* :

That no argument against the strain of this covenant having respect to *mere agency*, whether applying to God or a dependent being, can be arrayed successfully against the character ascribed to it.

him, and thereby to retain righteousness both for himself and for all his *posterity* after him, and every way to enjoy a spirit, soul, body, and an estate most blessed."

ARTICLES OF THE SYNOD OF DORT.

"As all men have sinned *in* Adam, and have become exposed to the curse and eternal death, God would have done no injustice to any one, if he had determined to leave the whole human race under sin and the curse, and to condemn them on account of sin; according to those words of the apostle, "All the world is become guilty before God." Romans iii. 19.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

"The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and *in* him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect, and personal obedience.

THE SAVOY CONFESSION.

"God having made a covenant of works and life thereupon, with our first parents, and all their posterity *in* them, they being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, did wilfully transgress the law of their creation, and break the covenant in eating the forbidden fruit."

If there be any thing whatever that should claim a particular notice, it is based no doubt on the *natural inequality* that subsists between our Maker, and the individual that forms the other party of it. An inequality, viewed as compatible enough with the relations of law-giver and subject, but not with the qualities required by the social spirit and relations of a compact.

But in reply to this, I can freely admit, that the distance between God and any dependent creature whatever, is truly great. Unspeakably great it is! And such as should inspire us, not only with a feeling of abasement, but with the profoundest emotion of religious awe. This no doubt, is a sentiment familiar to a holy mind; and was appreciated in all its importance by our first parent. But the distance between God and man, as bearing on the topic before us, if I mistake not, is altogether immaterial. And to make it apparent to the mind you have only to employ an apt simile; one of that nature, by which the correctness of the principle may be fitly illustrated.

With that very respect, imagine to yourself, then, if you please, an earthly parent; one clothed with the highest authority, making to a son a tender of this description. For example: "Son, go into my field and labor faithfully to-day, and at night I will make you a very handsome present." It is plain to my just apprehension, though the son be under a prior obligation to regard the authority of his parent, and without the gift, should obey his expressed wish even in that declared point, yet, in virtue of the allegation, the case *now* is materially changed. What he could not have claimed before solely in virtue of labor, in the instance of his regard, he may now insist upon from other considera-

tions. And though his title to the present be merely *pactional*, as observed, implying no proper merit whatever, yet that title, on every principle of moral equity is well founded. And the present in question he may challenge to himself, as you cannot fail to see immediately, from respect to the spirit and stipulations of a reciprocal engagement.

Again. In regard to any *unfairness* in what is intimated of the tenor of this covenant, it is hard to discover any possible ground for it, unless it be insinuated by the fact, that one of the parties is an *absolute* Sovereign, and by a natural, yea, infinite prerogative, bears rule over all his dependent creatures.

But so far as injustice, connected in our apprehension with a covenant between God and man may be drawn from this source, it is entirely misplaced. And most assuredly, if it have respect to the interest our first parents had in obeying the declared will of the Creator.

In relation to that point, the character of the parties, jointly considered, may relieve us from any fearful apprehension. If we look narrowly at it, nothing is plain-er than the intimation, whatever is urged in regard to the fallibility of Adam, yet, his Maker undoubtedly was infallible. He was supremely good and invariably just. And if the covenant referred to contained nothing interfering with the freedom of either—left them to act entirely their own will—I cannot but think, that there was every qualification on both sides to secure an agreement naturally desirable. A covenant, suited in its aim to promote the brightest manifestation of Jehovah's glory, and singularly adapted, if fairly noticed, to promote the safety and happiness of our natural progenitor.

And here I would barely ask, (supposing its exist-

ence,) if it were not the fact? If you will have a correct answer to the query, take simply the *condition* for a moment, viz., abstinence from the fruit of a certain tree; of which presently I will speak more largely, and on which the happiness of the first pair was made to depend. And I barely ask, if the infinite One, without any regard to the terms of a covenant could not justly have required it of Adam? If so, what reason could he have for doubting its fairness being simply aware of its very existence? For any disinclination to compliance with it, must be an act of daring wickedness; and result very plainly, in an absolute denial of all allegiance to the Majesty on high. Now if this be a just representation of the case, as the change of a precept *morally* just into the condition of a covenant transaction will not affect its nature, and consequently, Adam could find no fault with it in that light, it only remains to say a word of the promise and penalty. And while in regard to the former, I will only intimate, that it is vain, and worse than that, to talk of any disaffection with it, if it be found embraced in the character given unto it, I greatly err, if it be not equally so, to imagine, that the father of the human race, in a state of moral rectitude, could possibly have objected to the propriety of punishing sin in a most exemplary manner.

If the covenant then required nothing more than Adam was bound by the law of nature to do, nay had ability for, and even promised more happiness than he could otherwise have anticipated, it is plain to a demonstration, that God and man were *able* to form a covenant. They were able to understand, and cordially assent to terms mutually acceptable. And that they did it in fact, not only with the most untrammelled freedom of

the will, but with the highest advantage to the progenitor of our race, I think, is justly implied in the answer given to the serpent by Eve. For when a query was started, whether God had forbidden our first parents to taste of a certain fruit, she avers most sincerely: *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.** It would seem from the concession of Eve to be a given point with the happy pair, ere sin had destroyed them, that the tenure on which their happiness was suspended, was a very plain and reasonable requirement of the supreme Ruler.

I have said however in what is proposed on the subject, that one party in the covenant was our forefather Adam. I supposed that in his person *Eve* was included, as constituting in the mind of God but one agency in the transaction. They together formed the party on the side of man. And as their mutual consent in sinning was required in order to their fall, so, it were in vain to ask, what could be the consequence of one's obeying and the other disobeying in paradise? Not to say, that in the same circumstances a presumption exists that they would act alike, it is a given point, as will appear hereafter that their mutual defection was necessary to their falling upon trial. As necessary, if viewed merely as a sovereign dispensation of Almighty God as any thing else imaginable. As much so, for example, as the united act of mind and matter, of the will and of the hand, in a violation of the test, on which the personal welfare of the inmates of Eden was plainly and most signally depending. But leaving this for the present,

* *Genesis* iii. 2, 3.

2. I will speak in the *second* place, of the *condition* of the covenant made with Adam : And what as yet, I have merely anticipated in regard to it, I shall hope, to present also in a more distinct and satisfactory manner.

The condition, we are assured by the text, was entire abstinence from the fruit of a tree planted in paradise. And as the condition is given in the form of a precept, consistent enough with a covenant transaction as I have urged in a preceding statement, it may be fit in handling the point to speak of a distinction among the laws of our Maker. That I have in view is very generally confessed ; and may serve in a measure, perhaps, to disclose the equity of the divine administration in this lower world.

The laws of God then, for convenience sake, have been distinguished into *natural* and *positive* : intending by natural laws or requirements, in distinction from the other, those of natural and unchangeable obligation. Of the former class, for example, is the command to love God supremely ; our neighbor with a sincere and impartial affection ; to honor God's holy name, abstain from lying, stealing, murder and the like. These in all circumstances whatever are binding on the consciences of men, because, that they are of natural and everlasting application.

On the other hand, by positive laws or requirements, are intended those differing from the other to this extent ; or which, in respect to their source, as well as particular end, must be traced invariably to the sovereign will of God alone. Not, but that they have meanwhile a seat in the divine mind, and are rooted firmly in the principles of the all-wise and perfect government of God. But what I intend is merely this : In regard

to their proximate origin, as well as their application in respect to the circumstances of time, place, &c., we are indebted unequivocally to an expression from the Law-giver himself. The will of God alone is the object of regard. And while the reason of these laws may not be equally apparent to man, it is the will of Him only that constitutes the precise ground of obligation to obey. Of this general description, is the requirement under the Mosaic dispensation in regard to the time of keeping the sabbath, viz., on the *seventh* day of the week ; which under the christian dispensation is changed from the seventh to the *first*—a fair sample of what I intend by a precept of this nature. To which could easily be added many things under the former, and some things under the christian economy of a very similar complexion.*

But of this sort, I will barely suggest is the command in regard to the forbidden fruit, addressed plainly to the first pair in paradise. It was not a law of nature, or one of natural and unyielding obligation. It owed its origin to the sovereign will of the Creator ; and was to be observed, while that will should dictate plainly the

* If this distinction, though ancient, is not perfectly obvious, the reader may take, as of equal force, the following representation.

“The laws of God for the government of men, have some of them been temporary and local, and some of perpetual and universal obligation. The ceremonial and judicial laws of the Jews were, during the continuance of the Mosaic economy, perfectly obligatory on that people—as much so as the precepts of the decalogue. But they were local and temporary. They never were binding on any other people beside the Jews ; and not binding on them after the advent of the Messiah. They were given for a particular purpose—That purpose has been accomplished, and the Deity, the legislator who enacted, has repealed them, and they are no longer laws.”—*Green on the shorter Catechism.*

propriety of it. But while the distinction referred to may exist among the laws of the Creator, be it carefully marked on the subject that all laws of divine enactment agree plainly in one point. They come within the scope of the *moral* law. In all of them God speaks as a moral Governor, and with the authority of the "only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords." And the first requirement of the decalogue, to say no more, makes them all binding on our inmost spirit, viz., *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me* : or one God thou shalt have, and his authority must be complied with. And I conceive it will be hardly necessary to add, that if they all come within the sense of the moral code, they are all to be obeyed undoubtedly with the same temper of heart, and reverence for the authority that most graciously imposed them.

Having made this statement, we are prepared, I think, to weigh the condition of the covenant, and to discover in what its propriety eminently appeared.

First. The nature of the condition, considered as a positive law or requirement of our Maker, had this advantage very plainly. While the ground of it then was a special revelation from above, whether the reasons of it, in their intrinsic or relative magnitude were apparent or not, is immaterial : as in respect to *obligation*, which is the main thing in this discussion, the ground of respect to it being *merely*, as declared, the revealed will of a sovereign Lord.

This granted, in regard to the formal ground on which compliance is anticipated, I will add in the first place, that the condition of the covenant had the fact of *simpli-*
city to commend it to favor.

The condition I have already described : and no one can doubt that the test was fully placed before the mind of Adam. Nothing more simple, nothing more easy of apprehension could have been devised. It was purely an external act—a single thought—to abstain from a certain article on a tree. And no subterfuge of ignorance, no room for sheer mistake can be imagined in extenuation of sin. And bearing in mind too how various is the influence of law, as administered for a variety of purpose, the idea is one of considerable importance and merits at least a very solemn regard.

And with respect to Adam himself, whether he considered this trait of it or not, the test I apprehend should have taught him, that if God would revenge an infringement of a plain positive precept, with far more promptness, so to speak, would he revenge other precepts of the same law prescribing man's duty ; or, those which have their origin in the natural and enduring relations that subsist between himself and accountable beings throughout his vast empire.

Again. Not only the nature of the condition in respect to simplicity, but also in regard to *fullness of expression* will offer itself to our devout consideration. I look at it now touching the spirit of the decalogue ; the first and second tables of it : and how far, as a test of duty, it may serve to display the requirement of either. In what conceivable manner, it may extol the love we should have to God ; and the impartial affection that we should cherish toward a neighbor.

In regard then to its bearing particularly on the decalogue, I remark *first*, that it was fit to display the sense of the first table, by regarding especially the first precept of it. It was a loud response to the declaration of

Sinai, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* As I have said, one God thou shalt have, and his authority must be regarded. And with regard to the divine will, or its simple *manifestation* as the exact basis of compliance with it, you cannot fail to discover, that it was ordered wisely in regard to the first man to put his temper to a trial: and in the most glorious acceptance of it, to see if the will of God and that alone could govern his heart. And viewed in connexion with his trying situation, and the various motives he had to praise the moral and dispensed goodness of his Maker, you will find immediately, that the condition of the covenant, in regard to this feature, was admirably fitted to unfold the spirit of God's law.

Besides; the test contemplated was no less expressive of relative obligation implied in it; or what is familiarly designated by second table requirements.

Though Adam in respect to finite beings seemed to be alone, and his cares restricted to the precincts of a garden, notwithstanding, as a moral agent, the effect of his obedience or disobedience was by no means transient. And in regard to his own offspring which should arise to overspread the earth, it is altogether incredible he should not be aware, that the consequences of his conduct on some principle or other must affect their happiness: and that the weal or woe of myriads yet unborn was fearfully suspended on the manner in which he observed the pleasure of his Sovereign. Surely, in these circumstances, every tie of native sympathy, no less than the moral sense, or a quick perception of duty, should have persuaded him to pause: to beware of a step that was pregnant with all evil: and the only consequence of which could certainly be, not merely to ruin himself,

but to damn his species; and in respect to legal desert, bring upon his soul a peculiar and most repelling responsibility.

But once more. In regard to the precept of the covenant entered into with Adam, there is reason to think, it was designed to be of short duration. Or, the condition, as such, viewed as the turning point of the transaction was intended to be of transient application.

This, in fact, might be argued with considerable point from the analogy of the divine dispensation in regard to the fallen angels. For according to the inspired record, the time of their probation in heaven was undoubtedly a very limited period.

But so far as our first parents may deserve a notice, though we have no formal intimation from the Lawgiver himself in regard to the circumstance of time, it has justly been deemed an important thought, that the probation of Adam must have doubtless expired, whatever had been the consequence of it, prior to the birth of his immediate offspring. For on any other principle, appearing on the stage before his probation was closed, there had existed the same propriety, or *necessity* apparently, of subjecting them personally to a like trial. A position we are not prepared to adopt. As we believe it not only inconsistent with divine revelation, but also with an opinion very extensively embraced, and agreeing with painful *fact*, that the consequences of Adam's trial, were to have a decisive bearing on the moral temper and prospective happiness of all his posterity.*

* How long this probationary state would have lasted we are not able to determine; some suppose it would have been till Adam should have children capable of yielding obedience, or of sinning in their own persons; but if I may be allowed to offer a conjecture in this case,

And with respect to entire abstinence from the fruit of a tree as the requisition of the covenant formed in paradise, I will barely superadd, that if we respect the circumstances in which our forefather was placed ; especially his insulated state at the beginning, the earth being then uninhabited ; we may find it difficult to suggest a more easy and practicable test, one every way adapted to man's rational nature than what has invited our respectful examination. And in regard to that one, so clearly displayed in the prohibition of the text, it is not unlikely, as some have remarked, and in the absence of a particular intimation, that it was revealed to the great progenitor of our race by an audible voice from heaven.

With this discussion, I leave for the present the subject of our devout contemplation ; persuaded in my own heart that you are apprised in this stage of my remark, we are enlisted in a good cause, and are devoting our zeal to a theme of unparalleled interest. Nor can you be unimpressed that the subject is one wrapt in some obscurity : and which, from the brevity of the Mosaic records will require not only a comparison of the Scriptures, but what is not easy to all, an exercise of patience. It requires particularly that we bring to the meditation of it, a " spirit of meekness and wisdom," a sense of our own weakness and need of gracious instruction from above. That in pursuing the theme by permission of a covenant God, we may bask

perhaps it was to have been no longer than the fruit of that season should hang upon the forbidden tree. However, be this as it will, we may reasonably suppose the goodness of God made the period of his probationary state as short as might well consist with the honor of his government, in passing an act of confirmation upon his fulfilling it without default.—*Berry-street Sermons.*

in his smiles ; may search for knowledge with unwearied pace ; and enjoy the aid of that benignant Spirit, which maketh darkness light before us and leads the wandering mind into all truth.

DISCOURSE II.

Genesis ii. 16, 17—And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

In a preceding discourse, I called your attention to a subject of no ordinary interest to the human mind. One, more intimately connected with correct views of Bible truth than many are aware. And of great importance, not only in regard to our knowledge of salvation by a Mediator, but what relates certainly to an enlarged acquaintance with the works and ways of our Almighty Benefactor. In other words, I attempted to present to your regard, a well defined view of what is termed the covenant of works ; or, understanding supposed to have existed between moral agents. As I affirmed, betwixt the God of heaven on the one hand and a finite creature, viz., Adam on the other. And with that respect, we gave not only the view entertained of it, but resolved to present the parts and attributes of it distinctly to your apprehension.

In the prosecution of the same purpose, as you know, we made a subject of particular notice, what are called respectively the parties, and the condition of the covenant. And pursuing the plan, then announced, we are called in the next place, to meditate on a theme of liveliest import. A subject above all others, that *ought*, I imagine, and certainly will, in the pious mind, excite thoughts and feelings of unbounded interest. We are called to meditate on the dreadful *penalty* of that

covenant : or divine displeasure against sin, of which our text is a token, and which is denounced against the least aberration from its sacred requirements.

As this point will claim a patient attention, being urged particularly in the injunction of the text, I am determined in one discourse to give it a free, not to say, exclusive regard in what I may offer for your pious consideration.

We observe then, that this feature of the covenant alluded to, is preeminently exhibited in the text. The words are : *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat : But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

From this declaration of the divine Lawgiver, it appears, that disregard of his law was threatened with death. Death was an evil of punishment, denounced against the evil of sin. As the Author of our being declared—Eating of that fruit, thou “shalt surely die ;” or, in the Hebrew tongue, *dying thou shalt die*. A mode of address, denoting not merely the *certainty*, as some remark, but as I conceive, importing in like manner the solemnity and awful importance of the event.

And since the penalty is stated with that simplicity in the sacred history, though long a subject of debate, what is justly implied in it, a fair presumption exists that no ambiguity is chargeable on its author ; or is derived legitimately from any obscurity marring the revelation of his gracious will. And in vindication of the fact, I take upon myself to assert, that no exposition of it from Scripture or the acknowledged developements of Providence can impugn the belief, that by death *gene-*

rically viewed, is meant simply, *misery*,* infelicity and the like. Or if you will, though largely construed, *natural* evil arising from moral in whatever way it may appear, whether in the deprivation of good, or by the infliction of positive harm. This I conceive is the sense of the supreme Arbiter: is the impression that was certainly made on the heart of Adam. And what is worthy of respect, is consonant with the simplicity of other testimony where God's hatred of sin beams forth in like manner. For example: *The soul that sinneth it shall die.*† *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;*‡ and to that effect. From all which, it is apparent by an easy construction of the text, what the design of its Author is. For if we consider the threatening embraced in it, or death spoken of, not merely as a cessation of life, but what it actually imports, the opposite of a happy and desirable being, there can be no cause for perverting its meaning. In the simplicity of inspired truth, it will certainly appear, and more definitely I imagine, to those acquainted with Hebrew usage, that by the death contemplated, or displeasure of the Almighty against *sin*, is meant neither more nor less than what naturally arises from this view of the threatening itself—that is, a state of *complete, sensible, hopeless ruin and misery*.

But speaking of the death referred to in the text, you will call to mind, it is often presented to our notice under a twofold aspect; and termed accordingly natural and spiritual—the former relating to the body, the latter more immediately to the soul.

And naming a distinction of this character, it is freely declared, that though inclined to adopt it, we shall not

* LAT. *Malum*.

† Ezek. xviii. 20.

‡ Gal. iii. 10.

lose sight of what is implied in the term. For death, however employed, is an attribute of some *nature*. In its proper acceptation, and from that I shall not swerve, it imports a cessation of vital action, and is naturally followed by a certain disorganization in regard to the purposes of life itself. A view of the subject, as you will discern in a moment, to say no more, that renders its respect to mere *casualty*, or any thing evanescent entirely vain: and that accords, in my opinion, with the unbiassed impression which is generally entertained by those who freely employ the term in this relation.

With this remark on the subject of discussion, we may consider *first*, the death spoken of in a respect to the *body*.

And in this part of my argument, I will confine your attention, principally, to a particular evidence; or, that derived from the use of the verb "*die*" in the sacred scriptures. In a free investigation I find it often employed in the sense I contemplate. It denotes very plainly, the separation of soul and body; or change undergone by the latter, when the spirit takes its leave of this sublunary state.

In this sense, it is frequently employed by Moses. And applied to our mortal frame, it is very evident, imports a manifest and real dissolution. Examples of the fact can easily be named. For instance, in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, the very term of our text occurs five times in a limited space; and in respect to the body conveys precisely what I have suggested.*

I can name also an example of temporal dying where the same verb, nay, in the very same *form*, is presented to notice. You find it in the first book of Kings. With

regard then to Shimei who cursed David, it is declared by Solomon : *On the day that thou goest out and passest over the brook Kedron, thou shalt know for certain that thou SHALT SURELY DIE.** And touching his delinquency in not obeying that righteous admonition, it is very apparent, what kind of death was intended by the king.

Indeed, if the death contemplated be not embraced in the text, it is difficult to prove there is ought contained in it ; or, that Adam had any thing to fear from a threatening really above his comprehension. And to agitate the point therefore in what the divine wrath consisted, were that supposeable, would be in my regard a frivolous design, and involve an inexcusable waste of time and strength. But on the contrary : If the warning of the text do actually embrace the sense I have named, it is important to remark, that the death spoken of implies more than a bare separation of soul and body. It comprehends every thing that naturally conduces to that event : or implies fitly, what is found in any manner to have an unhappy bearing on natural life. It comprizes the long train of ills, which, through a habit of corporeal infirmity are found by experience to be either injurious, shameful, or distressing. So that not only the pang of final dissolution, but whatever leads on to it in wasting disease, is realized in fevers, consumptions, plagues, wounds, bruises, distortions, additions and defects in the system, must all be evidently set down to the untold misery implied in the threatening of the divine Lawgiver and Judge.†

* Chap. ii. 37.

† The primitive bodies of our first parents were not subject to the deformities and infirmities, the fatigues of labor, and the injuries of climates, or seasons, nor to distempers, violence, and death, which we

This is the view I had purposed to take of this matter, and other sources of proof, I have willingly dispensed with in this connexion.

Again. We may contemplate the death spoken of in the text, viewed as a *spiritual effect*, and distinguishable in its nature from what pertains to the body.

With regard to the phrase "spiritual death," as freely used, I think no impartial lover of the gospel can consistently object to it. The declaration is often repeated in your hearing: *The soul that sinneth, it shall die.** And not merely scriptural propriety, flowing from a similar verbiage, but what is worthy of notice, as most decisive, the death ascribed in Scripture to the immortal spirit, is denoted in Ezekiel by the word occurring in the text, even retaining the same form. An example is this: When I say unto the wicked, *Thou shalt surely die*; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall DIE IN HIS INIQUITY; but his blood will I require at thine hand.† It is evident from this statement, that the subject of admonition relates to the soul; and that a death in trespasses and sins is particularly described by the sacred penman. And touching the death spoken of, I may suggest, that in subsequent parts of the same prophecy it is spoken of in

are now exposed to; and no doubt but they were built with various beauties of due proportions, color, and form, vastly superior to all that now appear in the ruins of human nature. And perhaps, in their original state, there was an amiable and awful lustre shining all around them, and covering them as with a garment, something like that which shone in Moses' face when he had been with God in the Mount.—*Berry-street Sermons.*

* Ezek. xviii. 4, 20. † Ezek. iii. 18.

in a manner, as may appear, that is wholly inapplicable to the *body*. The reason of it also is very obvious. It arises then from the fact, that it is not *consummated* in the moment of real infliction on the wicked; and again, that the righteous, living as such, or dying unto sin daily, are delivered from a natural trial of its consequences.*

And respecting this dialect as designating a spiritual effect, I will remark by the way, that the figurative nature commonly ascribed to it, may be justly suspected. To say nothing of death as an attribute of some nature, I regard it then as a point of *philology*. And viewed in that light, nothing is more common among men than the use of a word in a twofold acceptation; and in respect to either, the meaning ascribed to it is equally proper. This is true of words that constantly recur, whatever be thought their primitive application. And manifestly of a particular class, which denotes not only

* I say, in regard to the wicked is not consummated, i. e. *perfectly* displayed while in the present world, though they live under its *fatal* tendencies. In proof of it, take the following: "*Again, when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and DIETH in them; for his iniquity that he hath done SHALL he die.*"* It is very plain, that the death contemplated in this passage, does not answer fitly the character of temporal death. Also, in regard to the righteous, I intimate, that they are delivered from a *proper* trial of its effects. With respect to that point, take the following: "*Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions, that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he SHALL NOT DIE.*"† It is equally evident in this, as in the other instance, that the death spoken of, can be only a death in sin; and from which in their own experience, as a vindicatory manifestation of divine hatred toward it, they are justly and everlastingly delivered.

* Chap. xviii. 26. † xviii. 27, 28.

sensible objects, but the more refined and spiritual endowments of our nature. Of those referred to, you may take for example the words *heart, sense, light, conception*, and some others. And in regard to this class you perceive immediately, that they are used, not only to denote sensible forms, but also gifts and operations of a very diverse description. A trait of speech, peculiarly prevalent in eastern idioms. And in respect to the Hebrew, is certainly one of undoubted interest; and can hardly escape the notice of any one, in the least acquainted with the original languages of the inspired volume.

But in relation to spiritual death, as implying what I have said, a difficulty arises frequently in the minds of some respecting its *penal nature*. The matter they suggest with great plainness. In their own dialect it is briefly as follows: "Is not the notion of punishing sin with sin implied in the fact?" Yea, if admitted, "is not the divine law in its coercive power made to subserve this dark and mysterious dispensation?"

In reply to this, I cheerfully premise the sense of a late writer. He says: "We must here, however, carefully distinguish between what in spiritual death belongs formally to the nature of sin, and that which is the effect of judicial infliction. To the former belongs the privation of rectitude, and the corruption of the whole man; to the latter pungent sorrow, and the privation of mental enjoyment. The former constitutes the sinfulness of man's fallen state, the latter its misery. That the former is not strictly penal must be obvious to every person of discernment. Whatever is strictly penal in spiritual death must be from God; but were this death as it lies in the privation of moral rectitude the ef-

fect of divine infliction, God would be the author of sin. Man sunk into spiritual death by his own *delinquency*, and not by judicial infliction on the part of God. By the same act of transgression which constituted him a sinner, he fell under the power of this death. The law and justice of God, it is true, gave him up, when thus fallen, to its dominion; so that by the force of his *own depravity* he sinks more and more under its power, unless that power is counteracted and overcome by supernatural grace. But this is a consequent of judicial permission, and not an effect of sensible wrath; and must be referred to that misery which springs out of the being of sin, and not that which arises from penal infliction on the part of God.*”

The words of this author I have repeated with a view to a fair consideration of this topic. If the distinction be a just one that he insists on, between what is implied in the origin and predominance of moral pravity, and that in respect to it which is certainly penal, a foundation is laid for a reply that is usually made, viz., That God, as a righteous Governor, may punish sin *with* sin, but not *as* sin. It is predicated on the fact, as you must perceive, that sin is a natural no less than moral evil, a hurtful no less than moral disability which hinders us from attaining the end of our existence. Viewed in that light, it may be a means in the hand of God of expressing his sovereign displeasure against iniquity. It can be adopted for that purpose, viewed merely as a positive *calamity*. And considered in that light, no doubt it has been employed by the supreme Majesty, and the principle asserted is made a matter of unchangeable record. And do you

* STEVENSON on the *Atonement*.

ask the proof of it, in what is evident respecting his conduct toward mankind? It would be easy to reply, that his own word contains unanswerable evidence of the fact: that in his dealings with our race, in ages gone by, he acted on the principle avowed. It would be easy to shew that in cases well known, he has displayed it. How he declares, for example, that he punished the adultery of David with the incest of Absalom. Solomon's idolatry by the revolt of Jeroboam. The sins of Israel by the oppression of the Assyrians. And in regard to sinners of our depraved species who trample under foot his paternal prerogative, that he is judicially pleased, as declared, to give them up *to the lusts of their own hearts* :* that they may receive in themselves *a recompense of error which is meet* :† and while unreclaimed by the grace of the gospel, yea, continuing in a state of confirmed guilt and impenitence, as the righteous reward of sin and shame, may eat of the fruit of their own way, and be literally *filled with their own devices*.‡

And with relation to the amount of pain and infamy that spring immediately from moral causes; the base appetites and malignant passions of our frame; or the moral nature of man *prostrate*, I think we may gain some lively impression of it, by looking at any sin in regard to its pestiferous influence on the condition of our race.

Surely, if observation can teach any thing, or experience confirm our acquaintance with the past, we know, that it is the nature of sin to separate the soul from a knowledge of its author; and deprive it of an exercise in which its faculties obtain their highest expan-

* Romans i. 24. † Romans i. 27.—Gr. *antimisthia*. ‡ Prov. i. 31.

sion. It is the nature of sin to take off the moral affections of the heart; or master feeling of it, from the only satisfactory good on which it is placed. And it is the nature of *every* sin, though small perhaps by comparison, to oppose a barrier between the creature, and the self-existent One, effectually debarring the former from sharing the natural expressions of divine complacency and care. And in the loss of a possession so strongly marked, I merely ask if there be no injury sustained? Is there no destruction of peace and comfort to the proprietor; or ought that should excite in the heart of a rebel a natural emotion of complete dissatisfaction?—If you would obtain a reply to the fearful inquiry, consider then, I entreat you, the experience which is naturally blended with the perpetration of all sin. Let it pass distinctly in review before the mind. Ponder it faithfully—the conscious guilt, feeling of desertion, bitter regret, sense of wrath, keen temptations, and awful fear of the Eternal's presence! And on comparison of these things, I repeat it—Is there nothing here inimical to happiness? Is there no worm close at the root of peace and concord? and whose incursive step blights the welfare and endearments of our state? I trust you can respond with one voice in the affirmation, and deprecate sin as a most alarming evil. And yet this simple sketch, I conceive, may be viewed as but a faint response to what is contained in the Book of inspiration. In words which the Holy Ghost teacheth our state is graphically penned. And in virtue of the apostacy, and of its natural effects, there is connected in a strain of unequalled pathos, with a lively apprehension of sin, and the unrestrained practice of it by dependent beings, a *reprobate sense*, a *seared con-*

science, hardened heart, vile affections, spirit of bondage, and in the consequence of an unremitted opposition to the divine will, being given up of God to a "strong delusion" to believe a lie that they *may be damned!* And in the possession of these characters, or what is naturally attained of them, man degrades himself below the beast that perisheth. The sacred energies of his soul are withered at the shrine of Satan. Yea, in virtue of such infatuation, as might be anticipated, the earth itself is filled with a prelibation of enduring anguish; and by a righteous dispensation, the rebellious worm, that defies Omnipotency, is most properly a subject of spiritual death.

Nor can it avail any thing whatever to reply to this statement, that no man during his stay upon the earth, is as sinful in the eye of his Maker as he can be. Or, that he may discover, perhaps, some cheering traits of natural goodness and pliancy of temper.

In regard to that instance, it does not reach the point contemplated in my remarks. The death I am speaking of is the dying of a *moral agent*: or rather, extinction of life occasioned by the loss of our Maker's image. And whatever else a man may retain while destitute of that glorious resemblance, and therefore unfit for communion with him whose *favor is life*; nay, however much he may be pleased with his circumstances, he is actually dead while he liveth. He has no conformity whatever to a law spiritually perfect, and from a settled aversion to it cannot bring forth fruit unto holiness. And regarding the sinner in that light, as an enemy of the Being that made him, the soul itself must be acknowledged the prime instrument of rebellion. It must be regarded, as the seat of all that is offensive to

a Being infinitely perfect and holy. And as the principal agent, in every thing relating to an unholy warfare with Heaven, it is easy to perceive, that the wounds it inflicts on itself are richly deserved. They are doubtless the sorest display of the wrath implied in the text. And ought in fact to be deprecated the more earnestly, as striking at the root of every thing spiritually excellent, and as wounds are found by painful consequence to be the more dangerous to the subject that bleed inwardly.*

Once more. In a faithful exposition of the death, or threatening implied in the injunction of the text, it may be viewed in regard to its *whole duration* in the experience of the transgressor himself.

With respect to that point, if left to the undisturbed operations of law and justice, the penalty must appear, in harmony with the simplicity of its publication, to be complete and hopeless misery throughout the whole period of the sinner's existence. If a distinction be made between time and eternity in respect to its execution,

* Spiritual death, or habitual and immoveable sin, in the view of Adam, a holy, and spotless being, and hating wholly every sin, might, I think, be regarded, not only as not chosen, or loved by him, but as an object of supreme dread and horror. Let it be, for a moment only, considered, how such a being must feel, under a sense of losing his holy character forever, and of being confirmed, beyond recall in a perpetual hatred of God, and a perpetual love and practice of sin; and I believe all serious persons will agree, that this debased, odious and contemptible character must appear to him an evil literally infinite. To sin *once*, was to him an object of horror; but to be consigned for that sin to *habitual and eternal rebellion and iniquity*, and to become thus forever hateful, vile, and despicable, must be, on the one hand, a loss; and on the other, a suffering, dreadful beyond all conception, except that of experience. It was, therefore, capable of being the subject of threatening, or penalty; and that to any supposable degree.—*Dwight*.

no reason can be given, why it may not be literally *everlasting*. Not, indeed, that the penalty does specifically declare it : but though silent on that point, the finite capacity of the transgressor will require it. For as sin is an infinite evil, at least, *objectively* so, nothing can atone for its dreadful demerit, but a suffering that is extensively commensurate with it. And while the light of nature may seem to teach us, that suffering beyond the grave is required for that end ; and mere change of circumstances cannot diminish the terrors of *spiritual* death ; the word of God, I apprehend has definitively settled the question—that in the eye of a law morally perfect, every violation of the divine will, as legally visited, must be followed up by the desolations of an interminable being.*

But while this is actually professed, as concerned with our first parent, however, the truth of the matter will admit of a qualified attention.

Had he remained then under the bond of the old covenant, and no mediator between God and man ap-

* God meant to punish Adam according to his deserts. And what did he deserve ? Why, an infinite punishment ; i. e. to have all good taken away, and all kinds of evil come upon him *forever*. Well, what good had Adam in possession ? Why he had a *natural life*, resulting from the union of his soul and body, with all the delights and sweetnesses thereof ; and he had a *spiritual life*, resulting from the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, and consisting of the image of God and sense of his love, with all the delights and sweetnesses thereof ; and he was formed for immortality, and so was in a capacity for *eternal life* and blessedness, in glorifying God, and enjoying him. Here, therefore he was capable of a *natural*, a *spiritual*, and an *eternal* death ; to have soul and body rent asunder forever ; to be forsaken by the Spirit of God, and given up to the power of sin and Satan forever, and to have God Almighty become his everlasting enemy. *All this* he deserved : and therefore God meant *all this*. All this he *knew* he should deserve ; and therefore he could not but *understand* the threatening to comprehend all this.—*Bellamy*.

peared for our relief, we can suppose, that the penal effects of sin had been similar to what is actually experienced. I say, had displayed the same visible character. As it respects the *body*, in the moment of transgression it were judicially dead : and at a date resolved upon in the divine mind, it had died actually. Remaining on the earth long enough to propagate his kind, or answer the ends of a certain pilgrimage, the dust had returned "to the earth as it was," but the spirit might have winged its course to the God that gave it. And though we admit a separation of soul and body to be the desert of that threatening, it cannot interfere with a resurrection of the latter, if needs be, and re-union to its spiritual partner. For on the principle that a sentence before a human court, as you are aware, very often includes the confinement of a culprit, and his being surrendered up on the day of execution—it will happen—that as the effect of legal threatening, rather than an act of adorable mercy, that union might be plainly formed in the consequence of a resurrection to damnation. And our first parents, in the same nature in which they transgressed the will of Heaven, might be made to endure the displeasure of a moral Governor through a ceaseless eternity.

And what is the sentiment in relation to it, obviously confirmed by kindred facts ? or, the light that is shed on this matter by the analogy of the divine dispensations revealed to our faith ?

If our attention be turned to the angels that sinned, we learn, that for an act of transgression they were cut off from the source of infinite blessedness : and in the very nature, in which they transgressed the will of God,

are made to endure the marks of vindictory displeasure forever and ever.

Or, if we turn to reprobate sinners in hell, damned not only for breaking a perfect law, but for rejecting the tender mercy of a Savior, we derive an argument of unyielding force in favor of the same opinion. For in regard to their condition in the world of despair, we are taught plainly, as relating to the *body*—that being remodelled in a peculiar manner, made inconsumable by fire and sustained without food, it is designed to be the instrument of pain to the undying soul. And that both the one and the other, in regard to their original destination, as bound to the performance of a rational service and promotive of a holy conversation, are acknowledged in every respect to be *dead*. And though the guilt of denying the Savior be enhanced by the terms of a more gracious covenant, as we freely confess—we shall honestly infer, that it furnishes at least fair presumption, that the guilt of Adam in rejecting kindness most impressively exhibited, would actually bring on himself an irreversible ruin.

But while no proof from the original transaction, or aught which is disclosed in the dispensations of Heaven, can quash the evidence in favor of this belief, but so far as it has a bearing whatever on the subject will establish it decisively, I arrest your attention for a moment to an important intimation, viz. : An opinion has been fostered in the church which makes the penalty of our text, in respect to a coming world, to embrace no infliction of positive evil, but to consist barely in the *deprivation of good*. It is an opinion which has extensively obtained. And the reason of it, as connected with the imputation of the first sin, and especially, its bearing on

those dying in infancy may be easily discovered. But with regard to the *fact* however, or what is really embraced in the divine threatening, the thought can be shown as repugnant to reason, as to the plainest principles of the divine administration ; and must appear so, to an unbiassed mind, that will give it for a moment a candid examination.

I say then, that the position is repugnant to *reason*. For the deprivation of all good cannot take place, without being attended with a sense of penal displeasure. In a sentient and active being, whose faculties will excite pain if not suitably employed—to say nothing of involuntary confinement in hell—the deprivation of good is a gloomy thought ; and till man shall lose forever a capacity of enjoyment, must excite in the breast of the conscious offender a lively sensation of vindictory wrath.

Again ; the idea is at variance with the very *nature of sin*. It appears so manifestly from a single consideration. For whatever idea be entertained of it, it is easy to see, as concerned with that point, that it is something more than a *negative* quality. It makes the creature not only unlike his Author, but in his own filth to bear the very image of the devil. And continuing in that state, it is morally certain that God will behold him with aversion ; and while seated on the throne of his holiness, will leave upon his person the unfading marks of his righteous disapprobation.

And being at war with the nature of sin, I hardly need subjoin—that it is wholly inconsistent with the spirituality and extent of the moral law. It is opposed to any conception that we may form of the decalogue. As in virtue of its threatening denounced against the least defection, it is affirmed, that the *wrath of God is revealed*

*from heaven against ALL ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.** And if the declaration remains true, while the veracity of the great King is unimpeachable, there is no reason to imagine that any will escape its fury, who is an enemy of the most High God, by a deviation from its pure and reasonable requirements.

But all argument in relation to the point, and without doubt, in regard to the duration of the penalty contemplated, is foreclosed by an appeal to the testimony of Christ. For in the gospel of our divine Master the truth is declared. And we are instructed not only, that a sense of positive indignation is the portion of the ungodly hereafter, but that the displeasure of God will be executed on them without intermission through an endless duration.

And turning to the gospel, as a source of credible proof on the subject, I may remark, that taken in a lax sense, as embracing not merely promises, but *moral* duties, it is not a rule of conduct distinct from the decalogue, or new *preceptive law*. One, for example, as some have explained it, of milder requirement, yet of more terrific penalty; but considered in this light, it is simply a more explicit revelation of what the divine law is disposed to insist on. And with regard to its office, meantime, as a source of information on the subject of remark, we strenuously urge, that while it speaks with more plainness of a future state; especially, the demerit of actual offences, as bringing on the sinner the infliction of "many stripes," it does not pretend any thing further. The doctrine of eternal suffering, as the recompense of sin, is not peculiar to that record. It is not as concerned with any individual, and

* Romans i. 17.

therefore, not with the first man. On the contrary, while it ever assumes, and does not create the connexion between sin and unending torment, it deals with our race simply, not as "without law to God," but as having incurred its dreadful penalty. And in a perfect exposition of what pertains to futurity, it disposes of them universally by sorting them into two classes: and in regard to either, if there be any dependence on the record itself, will insure the same general treatment in the day of judgment.

Nor can there be any room on this momentous theme, for the least misapprehension. With that record spread out to view, and, in imagination, an astonished universe convened at the last day—we are taught, that not only the dispisers of redeeming grace, but enemies of God universally, will inherit the same destiny. We are admonished, in fact, that they all will be present on that eventful occasion. As Christ affirmed, the "men of Nineveh" will be there; yea, and the "inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon." And among the rest, our progenitor will be there. And if he have not obtained the pardon of sin, of which it must be confessed, as relating to *himself*, in a near view, there is no absolute evidence in Scripture—in the same class with those who know not God, and have not a well founded hope in his mercy, he must go to a place of unceasing despair. And, on that *supposition*, shall hear from the lips of the omnipotent Jesus the unchangeable sentence: *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**

This, in our belief, is the substance of what is intended in the text by the threatening, "In the day that

* Matt. xxv. 41.

thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The aim of it, as it fell from the lips of the Lawgiver himself. And is naturally resolvable, from an eye not only to its primary publication, but especially, its influence in the experience of the sinner, as commonly stated—into death natural, spiritual, and eternal.

And having spoken largely of the nature of it, though not required by my *design* in this attempt, you will suffer me, in conclusion, simply to add:—That if the penalty be what I have said, there is reason to believe, that God was not only in earnest in threatening it, but that he actually inflicted it on the first man, in the very moment of violating his revealed will. I say *imposed* it. In the eye of the law, and to all intents and purposes, in a correct perception of it, we may consider that in virtue of the stroke, Adam was judicially dead. *Literally* so in regard to his soul: *inchoately* and certainly in regard to the body: and in respect to either, in the sight of an unerring Judge, a fit subject of everlasting agony and shame.

And in favor of the impression we shall earnestly insist, that if our Maker did not mean as he said, in that terrible threatning, he acted in defiance of all the dispensations of the divine government. Plainly, in opposition to his treatment of the fallen angels; who, leaving their first estate, for an act of daring impiety are doomed to everlasting misery. And what is equally impressive, as coming near to us, directly in opposition to what has been viewed a comforting thought, to wit: the final nature of that proceeding—in regard to both saints and sinners—that respects the awards of an eternal judgment. And, as bearing on the veracity of the supreme Ruler, if the idea be indulged, on what prin-

ciple, I ask, can we sustain his fidelity? How shall we demonstrate that he is a God of truth? or, in regard to this very transaction, clear up the equity of it, in a manner which may deserve the approbation of accountable agents?—Surely, if the design of his administration on earth, is not to disparage his recorded will, there is nothing in the Bible more express than I have named. Often is it urged on our attention, *The wages of sin is death*.* *Death by sin*, as the apostle has intimated, is a connexion vitally certain.† The reality of it is based not only on the unchangeable purity of Jehovah, but is required by the necessary deformity of vice. And until God shall cease to hate sin in a perfect manner, or his absolute purposes are disannulled, that connexion in regard to it, must be faithfully displayed.

Nor will it in my judgment avail the least whatever, to object with some in our day, that the particular evils denounced against the first pair after the fall, were no part of the primary threatening of our Maker. For example, *Severe toil, sorrow of heart, the pains of childbirth*, and the like. But that under a mediatorial dispensation, they were designed in much mercy, to be a part of a very gracious and paternal discipline.

Although, in respect to elect sinners, they are confessedly made to subserve that particular use, there is no proof whatever, that they were uttered in paradise with that intent by the righteous Governor of mankind. So far from it—they are introduced naturally as an appendix, or more properly indeed, a serious exposition of the original threatening. And without any regard whatever to the mediation of our divine Redeemer, as compared with the primary sentence, the exposition is

* Romans vi. 23. † Romans v. 12.

a perfect counterpart of the threatening itself. The evil threatened is—"Eating of that tree thou shalt surely die." The answer of the Judge—"Because thou hast eaten of it, which I commanded thee not to do, dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return:"—with regard to *that* specification, as you discover, the latter corresponding exactly to the former. And in respect to the various evils contemplated in the exception referred to, and which could be easily particularised—while they flowed purely from a federal transaction, it may also be observed, that they are such as were very congruous to their infant state. Of which, in their earliest experience they should know the guilty cause: and make them also a subject of prayerful and earnest meditation. And as adapted to answer a variety of purposes on God's part, better perhaps than we have certainly understood—it is very obvious in the reading of the inspired narrative, that they were judicially announced, both in spirit and form by the moral Sovereign of the universe.

DISCOURSE III.

Genesis ii. 16, 17—iii. 22—And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. —lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.

In what has been offered to your notice respecting the probation of Adam, we named some points, of what is termed a covenant transaction; and in the light of revealed truth, endeavored to make them a subject of devout meditation.

In our last attempt, we considered particularly the death spoken of in the text; viewing it, not merely as a threatening but terrific *sanction*, by which the claims of a covenant bond were practically enforced. And though we gave it a prior consideration, as respects the *promise* of the covenant, it was not from regard to the bare form of the agreement, or, the manner in which its stipulations are practically observed. It was rather from the fact, that the sanction occurring in the text is so strongly displayed: and a solemn conviction, that it might be more useful in regard to what is yet before us, and which, in the discussion of it, will be found in respect to its *proper aim*, to constitute more fitly the reigning feature of the covenant.

In accordance then with the plan adopted, we shall consider in the last place, the *promise* of the covenant whose attributes have claimed a serious regard: especially, the proof that may be drawn from unerring truth, in favor of its existence in a solemn engagement. And

having done so briefly, may go on, as was remarked, to take a survey of its ratification by an admirable expedient of the Creator.

With respect then to the text, as we observed, the penal displeasure of the Lawgiver is more formally asserted in it. But in regard to its precise import, as concerned in any shape with the existence of such a promise, that *fact*, will not determine of itself, that a blessing also is not fairly implied in it. In a fair view of it, there are two points, in my apprehension, that deserve a careful consideration. First: Though we were tied down to the Mosaic record, in regard to what was actually communicated to Adam, it is very easy to perceive, that our forefather did not stand in need of an explicit promise, so much as an explicit *penalty*. And the reason of it is apparent. As in regard to the former, or life contemplated by it, he had already a relish of it; while in respect to the legal consequences of sinning, it must be acknowledged at once that he was comparatively ignorant. Again; though a promise of life be not affirmed in the text, it is in our opinion strongly *implied* in it. If we are not grossly mistaken, in the very face of it, it is couched, that if he do not transgress, he will "surely live." Nay more; if a limited probation was assigned him, it is equally plain, that remaining steadfast to the end of it, he would certainly have been blessed with the happiness of an everlasting reward.

That this was the principle on which his trial was based, and these the auspices under which it really occurred, may be argued with *presumptive* evidence in a single resort to the narrative in Genesis: as, in a brief respect, to what is embraced in that account, we may certainly observe the following things.

First. If the penalty be as severe, and even the form of it, impressive—as we have declared, it is just to reason from those circumstances in favor of positive *kindness* displayed toward the innocent. And the principle that we improve will commend itself to any man's conscience before God. It is plainly this: That in the paternal care of Jehovah; in other words, in the character of one morally perfect, the happy union of every quality, and especially of *justice* and *benevolence* had been freely exhibited; and the same honor given to the former had been cordially bestowed upon the latter. A principle, in fact, which admits of easy illustration in the case of an earthly parent; one [who is qualified to bear rule at his own fireside; and who is alike just, and merciful, in what certainly pertains to the proper discipline, and care of his inconstant offspring. Again: Presumptive evidence derived from this quarter, is greatly strengthened by reference to a fact embraced in the sacred story. It is this: The evident connexion that subsisted between a positive institution, viz., the tree of life, and the happiness of our first parent. For whatever be the precise nature of it, in relation to the *tree itself*, which is offered only in the light of an apparent symbol, it is very plain, that it was associated in the mind of Adam with an idea of *eating and living forever*. And a connexion of this kind, as respects any fruit whatever, and certainly a definite one, could not be an arbitrary fact. It doubtless had a proper basis, and owed its existence to the supreme Ruler. And if any thing were desired to justify the thought, I barely add, that in my opinion, an allusion to it in the New Testament must appear truly significant. It is a declaration of Christ addressed to the church at Ephesus. He avers: *To him that*

OVERCOMETH, *will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.** Where the idea of finishing a certain trial is connected with an enduring reward, of which, the tree of life was anciently a living emblem.

But in speaking of the promise embraced in the covenant of works, we are not to suppose that the principal evidence in its favor, is derived only from the place in Genesis.

As connected with this point, it is a doctrine of the sacred scriptures which is expressed in the most unqualified manner—That the law of God *was ordained unto life.*† As the testimony implies, was laid on the human family by the only Potentate, to be observed as a *way of life*. It was laid therefore upon Adam—for his case is not anomalous. And with respect to the first man, could have given life, if he had obeyed it perfectly in a covenant form. It had secured to him the blessing, on fulfilling the condition of the compact, for the best reason imaginable, viz., that righteousness had come *by the law*. Nor is it any objection, but wholly in favor of the impression, that the law of God is no medium of life to his depraved offspring. Though it cannot justify us *now*, on the ground of personal compliance with it, the impotence confessedly pertaining to it, is not properly *inherent*. And in proof of the fact, I will only remark that it is no where said, or even implied in the scriptures, that a promise of life was never made to exact compliance with its dictates. Nothing whatever is found that wears the appearance of that dogma. On the contrary; the reason given why compliance with it cannot effect the glorious end, is merely this:

* Rev. ii. 7. † Romans vii. 10.

That by the law is *the knowledge of sin*.* The law cannot do it, in that it is *weak through the flesh*, and words to that effect.† From which it is honestly inferred, not that a promise of life was never appended to it, but that the law of God, as designed to be a way of life on the score of merit, and given with that specific design, is no longer serviceable in a particular respect for which it was promulgated.

From this statement, we learn without controversy, that a promise of life was made in the old covenant ; or understanding that existed between our first parent and his Maker. And in reference to the *nature* of the life embraced in that promise, I may add in like manner, that in due regard to the text, and from every just principle of interpretation, it can be only considered in one light, viz., as the opposite of the *death* we have fully discussed. It respects therefore not merely the body, but particularly the undying spirit : and connected with either, denotes that perfection of being, and conscious happiness derived from it, that spring only from personal friendship with the Author of all good. In regard to the nature of it, and the various consolation it might impart, it is the same substantially with that pureness of heart required of christians ; and the blessings of a new covenant confirmed to their faith by the blood of a Mediator. The very same undoubtedly, which the enduring relations between man and his Preserver, certainly require. And whatever had been its character in the primitive state, the promise annexed to fidelity in Eden, denoted unquestionably, not barely, as by implication, a continuation of being—but a life blessed with purity, vigor, liberty, exemption from pains

* Romans iii. 20. † Romans viii. 3.

and disappointment, and a perfect measure of undisturbed peace, plenty, and enjoyment.

But with relation to the promise spoken of, a query may arise in the mind—Have we explicit evidence, that the life referred to had been *everlasting* life? Also, whether Adam, having sojourned on earth for a time, and improved his probationary scene, had been finally removed to a state of enduring happiness in heaven?

To the first named inquiry I will reply in the following:

Apart then from presumptive and circumstantial evidence embraced in the history of the fall, and what is just named, there is unquestionable proof that the blessing contemplated had been an immortal prize. That the reward of obedience for a transient probation, was nothing less; and is urged on our notice in that light, in a various manner, in the book of inspiration. And referring to scriptural evidence in regard to it, I may adduce in support of it, and request you on the subject, simply, to compare the sense of two or three passages of the sacred volume. For example: in Leviticus it is declared, *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do he shall live in them: I am the Lord.** And to the same effect, we have similar testimony upon the inspired page. Again: in regard to the obedience implied in the passage just quoted, the *virtue* of it, were it a perfect and personal attribute, is declared in the epistle of Paul to the Romans. Nothing is plainer. He says: *For Moses describeth the righteousness of the law, that the man which doeth these things shall live by them.†* And the declaration is there made, merely to establish the single point—that no man can be justified by the law, on the ground plainly,

* Leviticus xviii. 5. † Romans x. 5.

that no man in his fallen state, is able to comply with the purity of its requirement. And solely with that respect, it is urged in favor of our relying wholly, for acceptance in law-judgment, upon the righteousness of faith. And further: that the life secured by the righteousness of the former, is of the same duration with that merited by our gracious Substitute, is apparent; for they often occur in a most intimate connexion, and never with the least acknowledged disparity in that view. An example in point, may be taken from the epistle to the Galatians. It runs thus: *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall LIVE by faith. And the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth them shall LIVE in them.** It is clear therefore, from the usage of the sacred penman, that the life spoken of in connexion with the two ways of acceptance with Jehovah, is unquestionably of the same perpetuity in the one case as in the other.

But again: The reply of Christ to a proposition made by a young man during his ministry on earth, is much to our purpose; and merits a serious notice in its bearing on the subject of our inquiry.

The object of regard was simply this: *Master what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?*† He was desirous of obtaining an interest in the skies; or, at least, of securing to himself the endless fruition of his Maker's benevolence and care. And in answer to what he must do for that exalted attainment, it is given him, *Keep the commandments.*

But in respect to that young man, as a youth supremely in love with the present world, and known to

* Galatians iii. 11, 12. † Matthew xix. 16.

be so by the blessed Master, we cannot imagine, I think, that he would exhort him to any thing *theoretically* vain ; which is evidently so, if eternal life in the primary use of the law, nay, on a transient probation, was not connected with a full compliance with its spirit. Nor again ; can we suppose that he would exhort him to a step practically desperate : or if you will, insist *ultimately* on his doing that to make sure of salvation, which is not required in the gospel, and that was entirely beyond his strength to accomplish. Yet, if the reply be taken merely, as made to one under the bond of a broken covenant ; whose fault is, that he does not really consent to the terms of a better ; and who cannot be convinced of his error but by an experimental notice of danger—all is very plain. The reply of our Saviour is based on a principle, universally proved true, whatever may be professed on the topic—that men desire naturally to be *under the law** ; and are not beaten off from that cruel presumption, except by urging upon their practice the severity of its broadest requirement. But considered in that light, as involving, at least, an historical reference to the primary ground of acceptance with the Supreme, viz., perfect and unceasing obedience as a way of life—the passage in question furnishes proof of a decisive nature, in favor of the sentiment that we are aiming to establish.

But I will not dwell on the point, to which your attention is solicited. For in addition to what is declared at this time, no person, aware how often the terms life and death, taken singly, are used in Scripture to designate an enduring recompense hereafter, can believe, that

* Galatians iv. 21.

what I have urged is unimportant, in respect to its bearing on the duration of the promise implied in our text.*

And with regard to the other inquiry, viz., Whether Adam, having improved his advantages on earth, had been removed to a place in the heavenly country—being persuaded to take the affirmative in the absence of specific intimation, I will corroborate the opinion with two or three important suggestions.

First. I cannot believe that the condition of Adam on earth, in respect to *himself*, was the most favorable to calm and increasing enjoyment. That it was eminently blessed, is most cheerfully admitted. But as respects the inferior appetites of our nature, or influence they must have exerted over him; and especially, the bearing of *animal subsistence*, it could not, in our apprehension, have been the most eligible for perfect happiness. It could hardly have promoted in the first pair, the greatest amount of knowledge and piety: and under any aspect, must be plainly regarded, as conducive rather to attainments of a very stationary character.

Again. It is not agreeable to the analogy of the divine dispensations, that confirmation in holiness, should not be followed up by an increase of felicity. This, I apprehend, may be fairly elucidated by respect to the holy angels. For after their confirmation, in Heaven, the knowledge and happiness derived from acquaintance with redemption is important. And while every virtue

* Of *Life*, remark instances of this nature. Psal. xvi. 11. Prov. xiv. 27. Ezek. xxxiii. 15. Matt. vii. 14, and xviii. 8. John iii. 6, and v. 29, and xi. 25. Rom. v. 10, 17, 18. II Cor. iii. 6, and v. 4. Gal. iii. 21. James i. 2. I John v. 12. Rev. ii. 10. Of *Death*, barely the following. Prov. xiv. 12. John viii. 51. Rom. i. 32, and vi. 21, 23. II Cor. ii. 16, and iii. 7. James i. 15, and v. 20. I John iii. 14, and v. 16. Rev. i. 18, and xiv. 12.

they possess, is greatly enriched by its contemplation, the advantage derived from that quarter, would seem very congruous to a state of *secure happiness*. And viewed in that light, it has often occurred to me, that it may intimate something in regard to a heavenly portion, that Adam had attained, on a perfect compliance with the will of the Almighty.

And finally. It is no extravagant supposition, that proof in regard to this point may be drawn from regard to the situation of the race. For in the administration of the old covenant, had Adam remained here below, his posterity which appeared in due time must have overstocked the earth. The apprehension is felt, at least, to be perfectly natural. And the only remedy imaginable for that evil, in case the first man and his offspring maintained their innocence, is to suppose a proper translation to a state of heavenly enjoyment. A consideration, which might have been urged on the notice of the patriarchs, when Enoch in early life—having the answer of a good conscience that his ways pleased the Lord—was caught up in the early history of our race, to join the beatific throng that range amid the heavenly courts.

I could name also on this point, the reply of Christ to the young man, whose case we have just contemplated. Advising him to sell all that he had, in a trial of his disposition, or declaring he lacked one thing to the attainment of eternal life, he affirms, that if he obeyed his advice, he would attain a *treasure in heaven*: importing evidently, that the life annexed in the eye of the law to compliance with it, and, as the reward of well-doing, is synonymous with the nature and paramount blessedness of that, conferred on God's believing people in the

dispensations of the last day. But this I trust may be amply enough.—And ye go on, as proposed, to what is termed a ratification of the divine promise by an excellent device of its adorable Disposer.

And in speaking of its ratification, by the “Lord of heaven and earth,” I will merely confirm the opinion, that it was unquestionably in the use of a sacramental rite.

Of the *material* however employed for it, there may be some difference of opinion. While it is generally admitted, that the tree of life was set apart for a sacramental sign, others, would add unto that, the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” And in respect to the latter, there is no proof against its use, based merely on the mode of its application: or, a consideration of the fact, that it was not primarily intended for a subjective gratification of sense. For as the nature of the christian institutes may intimate, I think, and as the learned Witsius remarks: It is not the nature of a sacrament, in regard to sensual allurements, to be designed exclusively for the *mouth and the palate*. And should we acknowledge it therefore as a positive institution, it may not only be a sacrament, but in its distinctive character, may have an important respect to the manner, in which the blessings of the old covenant were to be attained.

In respect to this point however, it may not be suppressed, that in urging the claims of the latter, it is said, that a rite of this acknowledged importance should be evidently ordained of God for the purpose: and with that view, it appears, that some are inclined to insist only upon the tree of life. And from my own investigation, I shall confess, that the impression is one of solemn importance, and in its bearing too on this topic,

that I am measurably disposed to the same conviction. Nor can the reason of it, perhaps, be very distant from your perception. For in the reading of the narrative, I observe in regard to the latter, that it is naturally introduced, as if, it were its primary aim. Is presented to our notice, as designed for that specific end, viz., to be recognized by man as the seal of a promise; a voluntary and practical sign, or, a substantial pledge, sustaining a due resemblance to a blessing signified by an almighty Benefactor. And if any thing more were lacking to favor the suggestion, what may strengthen it plainly, is a reflection of no trivial interest. It is this: That the name given to that tree—the tree *of life*—can hardly be explained on any other plan, than its definite application in the manner contemplated. And to make it the more evident in your apprehension, I will only add here, what may be worthy at least of an honest meditation.

First. In relation to that point, there is no proof whatever, that the *name* is taken from any extraordinary virtue it had, for nourishing our frame in an earthly paradise: especially, from any nutritious quality it might possess for preserving the health of our sensitive part. That it bore fruit of an excellent kind, may be easily presumed; and the same may be conjectured, not only in regard to the tree interdicted, I conceive, but every other, perhaps, that bore any fruit in the paradisiacal inclosure. But that its nature was unparalleled in this respect, is bare presumption. Is not supposed in the narrative of Moses; and cannot be inferred with any more certainty from it, than a natural effect is inferred, from what is said of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”—whose name was given it from considerations that are altogether spiritual.

Again: What some have objected in regard to this tree, deriving its name from a quality it had for restoring our nature to perfect soundness after the apostacy, is very surprizing. The origin of this prejudice, is a perversion of the divine declaration in respect to Adam, viz., *lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever*. But in regard to that declaration, if it be founded on, or imply any thing more than its symbolical use, as a sacrament of that economy, we should receive it rather, as the expression of *pity* toward a deluded creature. A rebel, who would put forth his hand as usual to the tree—and in a change of circumstances as fatal, as it was wholly unprovoked—would manifestly do it from motives, that were altogether incongruous with his fallen state. But the idea of restoring our nature to health, as derived from this source, is exceedingly vain. It is so in every respect. As relating to the *body*, it is hard to imagine that any fruit should be a sovereign antidote against mortality; and least of all, when the curse of the great God was lying on the earth. And in respect to the soul, whose deep-rooted maladies we have shown, are the sorest part of the divine threatening, it is perfect folly to think, that any fruit, in paradise or elsewhere, could indemnify our first parents, in regard to the painful and complicated effects of their own transgression.*

* When transgression had subjected Adam to a sentence of condemnation, the case was altered. Glory and immortality could no longer be obtained upon the terms of the first covenant, now broken and void. The very attempt became criminal. Man was to be put under a new covenant, and in a new course of trial. He was to suffer in the flesh for sin, and to pay the penalty of death. But, through the merits of a surety, that death was to be made the gate of immortality. By faith he was to acquire, upon the mediatorial plan, a fresh

In regard to the tree of life, therefore, its *name*, conspicuousness, as well as other circumstances establish an impression—that in the old covenant, it was an ordinance of Almighty God : and whatever shall be said of a similar rite, was made use of to represent and seal the important blessings it contained.

Having discoursed thus largely of the covenant of life formed with our ancestor in Eden ; or expatiated on the parties, condition, sanction, and the glorious promise of the covenant—I will ask your attention to a

right or power to eat of the Tree of Life, and live forever, after the resurrection from the dead, with his propitiated and reconciled Maker. In mercy, therefore, he was excluded from the garden of Eden, and from the original symbol of that eternal life, which was now to be sought after by other means, and represented by other sacraments. He was sent forth into the world to pass his time in toil, pain, and sorrow ; in mourning, contrition, and penance ; till death should set him free and introduce him to the joys purchased and prepared for him by that blessed person “in whom is Life, and the life was the Light of men.” The same divine person was always the source of immortality, however the sacred symbols instituted to adumbrate it, have been varied under different dispensations. To our first parents before the fall, he stood in the relation of Creator and Lord. To them, and to their posterity, since that sad catastrophe, he hath stood, and ever continued to stand, in the new relation of Saviour and Redeemer. The man who doth not now acknowledge him in this latter character, will find him in the former, an avenger to execute wrath : and what wrath can be so fierce and terrible, as that of the Lamb ? It is oil set on fire. The sinner, unless he be in love with condemnation, must not revert to the first covenant, and aim at the acquisition of eternal life, on the foot of the law of works, or the performance of unsinning obedience. In this case, the rebel claims promotion, instead of suing for pardon. He puts forth his hand to the fruit of the now forbidden tree, which is no longer food for man. Its nature is changed with our condition. To the eye of human pride it still looks fair and tempting ; but its contents, when eaten are ashes and sulphur ; and immortality without redemption would prove the reverse of a blessing.—*Green, on the Shorter Catechism.*

further consideration of the subject, that naturally arises, from what has been offered for your particular examination.

And first. If what is advanced in regard to the covenant be fundamentally true, we find displayed in it, the unbounded *goodness* and pity of the infinite God.

In a proper view of this matter, and to render it the more obvious to your mind, I will assert on the one hand : That Jehovah in this covenant acquired no new *right* or prerogative whatever. In regard to his personal endowments, he was not more rich or happy than he might be, had this covenant never been established. In other words ; viewed as the only Potentate, " who only hath immortality," or underived excellence, he had the sources of inexhaustible felicity in himself :—and he could have eternally remained happy, without any respect to the consequence of a trial in the garden. And if any thing more be distinctly considered—in its bearing upon his Lordship, founded primarily on infinite excellence, it did not add or diminish ought from his privilege, of laying a command on the race which was actually just. Of binding their souls by any rule, natural or positive. And I may add too—giving it to them simply in the form of a requirement, or, the condition of a covenant offered for their immediate subscription. And with regard to the point, that in the covenant contemplated, God comes under obligation to man—as it was purely sovereign condescension, and he became more properly a debtor to himself than any creature whatever—it is very clear, that it could add nothing of power or happiness to his prior advantages : or, in respect to that thing, presents him materially in a different light, from what he had appeared, had he

displayed his manifold kindness toward man simply in the style of an absolute sovereign.

But on the part of man, the case was infinitely the reverse. He alone could be profited by this dispensation. As relating to himself, it was every way to his greater advantage. It was so manifestly, in regard to the term of his probation on earth: for now it was *limited*—and the hazard of a probation that might be uncertain and endless, was kindly superseded. It was so, as concerned with the simplicity of the test divinely enacted. In a view of that feature, you will bear in mind that it was not the *moral code* in the variety of its application: for then, were he exposed in every point, place, and temptation to the wiles of Satan. Nor was it in fact *merely* a voluntary act. It was barely a plain and outward test of faithfulness: one too simple, I had almost said, to be perverted by the craftiness of the devil. As we heard: “Abstain from the tree, and thou shalt live”—“Eat of it, and thou shalt certainly die.” And while the test was simple, yea, of temporary obligation—you will certainly infer meanwhile, that Adam had nothing to fear, about apostatising from any other breach of the divine will. As generally admitted, the bare fact of a penalty annexed to a positive precept, and one of indifferent nature, argues plainly, that God would have kept him from falling by any other act of sinful indulgence. He had so disposed in his mysterious providence, that in the consequence of his sinning at all, this should be his *first* sin: and in regard to that circumstance, he had nothing immediately to dread, that could possibly mar the peace and felicity of his situation. And as I observed, in the view entertained of the whole matter, it is a point of no trifling importance, that

instead of the prize of a natural probation—consisting, as remarked, in little else than exemption from deserved wrath—here was a prospect truly most animating ! For if Adam obeyed in this particular instance, instead of uncertain compliance, he had been eternally confirmed in obedience to every part and requisition of the moral law. And instead of present comfort *merely*, derived from conformity to the will of the supreme Arbiter, as the reward of innocence and fidelity both, he had, in a little time, been established in a state of unalloyed peace, and in the perfect glories of an endless beatitude.

We infer therefore, that within the stipulations of the covenant alluded to, or fullness of the gracious provision implied in it, the eternal God displayed his parental kindness in a most lively and engaging manner.*

* The name of Jonathan Edwards is occasionally referred to in this work, as one in the main, thoroughly orthodox. It is only to be lamented that his speculations about *identity*, moral oneness, successive existence, &c. should have marred the simplicity of his able treatise ; and in the pursuit of a delighted theory, should have led him to wander so far into the fields of fruitless and conjectural inquiry.

With regard to his observations on the kindness of God displayed toward the first man, I will suggest the following :

"The *goodness* of God in such a constitution with Adam appears in this : That if there had been no *sovereign gracious* establishment at all, but God had proceeded only on the foot of mere *justice*, and had gone no further than this required, he might have demanded of Adam and all his posterity, that they should perform *perfect, perpetual* obedience without ever failing in the least instance, on pain of *eternal death*, and might have made the demand, *without* the promise of any positive *reward* for their obedience. For perfect obedience is a *debt* that every one owes to his Creator, and therefore is, what his Creator was not obliged to pay him for. None is obliged to pay his debtor only for discharging his just debt. But such was evidently the constitution with Adam, that an eternal happy life was to be the consequence of his persevering fidelity, to all such as were included within that constitution (of which the tree of life was a sign) as well as eternal death to be the consequence of his disobedience."—*Original Sin*, p. 445.

But again. In view of what is offered on the theme of contemplation, I remark : A strong *presumption* arises, that the covenant made with Adam was made *in* him, and with him, for all his posterity : and in the legal consequences of his sin, they share with their progenitor, as copartners in a public engagement.

In favor of the opinion then, I will observe, that in addition to what is distinctly presented, presumptive proof of it, arises from the situation of Adam as the *natural root* of his unborn posterity. His condition was materially different in that respect from the angelic orders. They were formed separately—*separately*, they were placed under the law—and in respect to their blessedness, fell from it solely in a personal consciousness of defection. But that was not wholly the case with Adam. If the Mosaic record be our guide, he was addressed more commonly, not as one, but as the head of a vast progeny. A fact, I should think, very clearly exhibited, in what is said to him about animal food, the marriage covenant, the seven day sabbath, and dominion over all the inferior creation. In all these communications of himself, God revealed to him what he certainly intended for his natural offspring. And without a distinct allusion to the latter, I infer from the most irrefragible testimony, in regard to the above named considerations, that he was dealing with human nature, *as such* ; and in the person of our common parent, considering our nature as formally subsisting, that he addressed himself immediately to all mankind.

Again. Presumptive evidence derived from this source, is materially strengthened by another consideration : one, intimately conjoined in the Mosaic account with the declaration of the text. I refer to the predic-

ament of *Eve*, when the precept was announced in regard to the forbidden fruit. On a mere glance at the narrative, you perceive that she had no existence at that moment, save in our forefather: and yet, she is subject apparently to the spirit of the same identical agreement.

And remarking to the point, we observe, in a clear perception of it, that our text, as occurring in the second chapter of Genesis, is no proof of Eve's existence before its delivery. The orderly account of her origin is made in *this chapter* posterior to that thing. And whether formed outright the first day, or, as some imagine, only virtually in the person of Adam, is immaterial—if the order of relation respecting the facts be retained. And keeping to that, which is prompted by the narrative, in the improvement I will make of it—it is plain, that the text itself, as addressed to Adam, was uttered *in him* and through him, to the mother of our race; and the precept of it was made binding on her regard *judicially*, at least, before she appears to have acted a responsible part.

And in harmony with the position, every thing which could evince a covenant transaction is in admirable keeping. When their probation had fully terminated, nay—a trial was summoned—we find that Adam is uniformly dealt with, as a principal transgressor. As the one, by whom sin entered the world, he is arraigned *first*: and being convicted of a fault, upon his person, the curse threatened by God was formally denounced. There is something in his case, pervading the whole measure that is peculiar: and it leaves an impression on the mind, that he was in himself—and by a singular eminence—the *offending party* that violated the stipulations of a most solemn engagement.

Now, if Eve were designed to act wholly an independent part in the matter ; and prior to her formation, was not included in the terms of any agreement ; it is plain, I should suppose, that she would have been presented to us in a very different light.*

Once more. The argument founded on the relation of Adam to his posterity, and what I have intimated, is reduced to *moral certainty*—if we examine the sense of some testimony, having a definite regard to the covenant of friendship formed in paradise. I refer at this time *merely*, to a direct allusion of the holy penman to what I have considered.

In illustrating the *fact* of such regard, I am satisfied with announcing simply a declaration from the prophecy of Hosea. It is this : *But they like men have transgressed*

* Having spoken of the goodness of God displayed in that covenant, the author just quoted, adds :

And as such a constitution was *fit* and *wise* in other respects, so it was in this that follows. Seeing the divine constitution concerning the *manner* of mankind's coming into existence in their propagation, was such as did so naturally *unite* them, and made them in so many respects *one*, naturally leading them to a close union in society, and manifold intercourse, and mutual dependence, things were wisely so established, that all should naturally be in one and the same *moral state* ; and not in such exceeding different states, as that some should be perfectly *innocent* and holy, but others corrupt and wicked ; some needing a Saviour and others needing none ; some in a confirmed state of perfect *happiness*, but others in a state of public condemnation to perfect and eternal *misery* ; some justly exposed to great calamities in the world, but others by their innocence raised above all suffering. Such a vast diversity of state would by no means have agreed with the natural and necessary constitution and unavoidable situation and circumstances of the world of mankind ; *all made of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth*, to be united and blended in society, and to partake together in the natural and common good and evil of this lower world.—*Original Sin.* p. 457.

*the covenant ; there have they dealt treacherously with me.**

Observe the phrase—they like *men* have done so. The original word rendered men, is the same which in Genesis, is rendered simply, *Adam*. The word *here*, has even a singular form. And if it be rendered the same way, as all serious expositors do cordially admit, the passage is this: “They like Adam have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously with me.”† And leaving out of view, that the word is actually rendered so, in other parts of Scripture, I conceive the propriety of it in this place, may be easily perceived. There is no danger of material error on this point, for it is obvious, viewed simply in this light. Considering then, that Hosea spake to the apostate tribes of Israel, it has a peculiar and admirable propriety. For as Adam, by the goodness of God was placed in paradise, so they were placed in the land of Canaan: as Adam was driven out of Eden on account of sin, so they, he de-

* Chap. vi. 7.

†The original word is found only in two other places: in one of which, Job xxxi. 33, our translators have rendered it, *as Adam*; and had they so translated it, in the other, Psalm lxxxii. 7, the passage would have been much more plain, and striking. “I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children, Heb. *sons* of the most High: but ye shall die like *Adam*,” like Adam who was a *son* of God. The phrase in Job, evidently refers to Adam’s excusing, or attempting to cover, his sin of eating the forbidden fruit. As, therefore, the word is the same in all the three places, the marginal reading in Hosea, which is the literal one, seems to many others, as well as to me, to be the true one: But they like *Adam*, have transgressed the covenant. If the Spirit of inspiration, in one of these passages, refers to Adam’s covering of his transgression, and in another, to the death to which, by his transgression, he became obnoxious; is it not natural to conclude, that in the third, he refers to the transgression itself, which occasioned both the one and the other?—*Colquhoun on the Cov. of Works.*

clares, before whom the blessing and the curse were displayed, should be driven out of Judea, if they persist in a course of wilful opposition to the requirements of the Almighty. And, brethren, the divine threatening was not in vain. The result places it beyond all doubt: for the *fact* typified, was mournfully accomplished by their captivity in the east. And the force of the allusion will be fully apparent, if we bear in mind, that the covenant with Israel was a *federal* act. That it embraced not only them, but their posterity throughout their generations; not only parents but their little ones, yea, and the stranger that should afterward sojourn among them. The terms of it, as given in Deuteronomy, are the following: *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel: your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: That he may establish thee to-day, for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you ONLY do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is NOT here with us this day.**

From the declaration of Hosea, and the exposition of the subject in this and a preceding inquiry, we honestly infer, that a covenant was formed with Adam in paradise. A compact, of which we have explained the parts. And the *truth* of which, in the whole extent of

* Deut. xxix. 10, 15.

its influence, will be more largely developed, when we come to discuss the imputation of the first offence to his natural posterity.

In respect, however, to the goodness of God revealed in the transaction, I could have added more, which had eminently displayed the propriety of its design. Which must establish the moral fitness of it, as founded in the relations which exist between man and Infinite excellence. That fitness, for example, exhibited in the obligation assumed on God's part, to manifest his benevolence toward the innocent. A feature of the agreement, not merely concerned with divine veracity, but in regard to his real character, which renders him properly an amiable Being. And much might be said, in respect to the endearing intercourse which is fostered by the terms of a mutual engagement, among those who are naturally unequal. An advantage on the part of an inferior, as displayed in this instance, which is gained partly, by an unbounded condescension of the Maker, and in part, by a conscious elevation of the creature himself. A moral fact, that is often disclosed in covenants among men, and which is made frequently a subject of particular regard in the sacred writings.

But without a farther discussion of the *suitableness* of this divine dispensation, as regards the interest posterity had in that probation, arising from a certain respect to the first pair, I close, with merely adopting the sense of an eloquent preacher. He remarks: "If our whole race had been created when this understanding took place: had all the offspring of the first man been ranged about him at the commencement; and the terms of a public manifesto, of the nature described, been fully offered to their acceptance: I do not say, it had not en-

tered the imagination of the heart, to look for any thing more desirable than its stipulations, but of this, I am confident—if a solitary agent in this innumerable multitude had rejected a trial of this nature with disdain, or spurned away its kindness—it had been just in God Almighty, to have annihilated that rebel in an instant. And when the consequence had appeared, all Heaven must have approved the *act*: and so far from a stain, lying on the sceptre of a gracious King—his throne should have remained forever guiltless, and his glorious character, unimpeachable and lovely in the perception of an admiring universe.”

THE FALL OF MAN.

DISCOURSE IV.

Genesis iii. 6—And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food; and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

The covenant made with Adam in paradise, was not long regarded on his part. The condition, plainly stated, was not observed by the first pair. Of this, we are admonished by the text: for the main point on which the blessings of the covenant were suspended, viz., abstinence from the fruit of a certain tree—was not wisely adhered to. With regard to delinquency in that trial, it is faithfully averred—that the woman, who was designed to be an help-meet of the first man, took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

The covenant being violated then, it becomes us with liveliest interest, to consider the steps by which the painful occurrence took place. And if we are suffered, in the good pleasure of its author, to trace the scheme by which the act was prosecuted, we should bear in recollection, that the word of God is our only guide on the subject; and the information it imparts, should ever be received, with the simplicity of heart and communication that becomes an inspired record.

In discoursing on this subject, I shall take occasion,

First. To speak of the Tempter, as he is styled; and the *measures* he employed for promoting a rebellion in the garden.

Again. A particular object, that is made prominent in promoting his intentions, viz., the *forbidden fruit*.

And finally. The actual *guilt* incurred by the first pair, in yielding to his infernal persuasion respecting the use of it.

First. In regard to the *tempter*, his character, measures and the like.

Here it must be acknowledged, that in the temptation and fall of man, he takes the name doubtless of a *serpent*: and from the historical fact, a diversity of opinion has arisen, in respect to what is truly the character of that being.

But with regard to his character, as far as that may deserve a separate notice, I am deeply convinced, that there are two *extremes* in the opinions respecting it. I mean more especially in regard to the query—Who the serpent is? or, what rank he may sustain in the scale of animated being? For some have contended on one hand, that a serpent, properly so called, and nothing but a serpent, was employed in the trespass of the garden. While others in like manner, insist on it, that no serpent properly speaking is found there, but an invisible agent, of which, the serpent spoken of, was barely an unreal sign, or, at the most—an *external symbol*. And in naming the extremes, or what I describe in this manner, there is, at least, some consolation in the thought, that if but one agency in strict propriety was mainly the cause of sinning, it must be purely a serpent's act, or solely that of Satan. For reason and the sacred narrative alike, will plainly teach us, that on that hypothesis, no other agent than one or the other of the two, can be really imagined, to have set on foot that infamous conspiracy.

This being premised, I will propose a few thoughts, which may leave an impression on the mind, that neither view is fundamentally correct; but the truth of the matter lies more evidently here—that a real serpent was actually engaged in the affair, and that serpent, at the same time, was literally “possessed of the devil.” A position, in my apprehension, that may harmonize every scheme, and accord particularly with the truth of divine revelation.

First. A real serpent then, was concerned in that foul transaction.

This is proved in the first place, by the entire uniformity with which the tempter is so denominated in the third chapter of Genesis. For not only Moses calls him so, as an historian, but he declares in the chapter, (in a record of the whole matter,) that the woman spake of him by that name.* And not only so, indeed, but the Lord God addressed himself to him, as *the serpent*, or outward agent, at least, employed in that transaction.† And what may deserve particular notice, he is not only styled thus in the record spoken of—but the original word here employed, is commonly made use of, to signify that creature in the pages of the Old Testament: A lively instance of which, you have in the book of Numbers, where it often occurs to denote the animal, or fiery serpent, by which the Jews were bitten on their way through the wilderness.‡ And to say the least, if a real serpent were not employed in that affair, but only *Satan*—it were a very faint compliment indeed to lavish on the arch apostate, to say of him, that he was more *subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made*.§ To say, indeed, that he were

* Gen. iii. 13. † Gen. iii. 14. ‡ xxi, 6, 7, 8 and 9. § Gen. iii. 1.

more so than *man*, had not been extravagant. But this, certainly, were no extraordinary meed of praise ; and hardly comports, in my weak apprehension, with the spirit of that maxim, which requires us to render even unto the devil his due.

But again. A real serpent was not only interested in that affair, but the principal actor, no doubt was Satan himself. This is proved by the fact—if we had nothing further in regard to it—that the serpent in question could both *speak* and *reason* ; and exhibit those qualities, for aught that appears, in a high state of perfection. This did the serpent. And yet nothing is clearer in my perception, than that this is no attribute of a mere animal.

In respect to *reason*, whatever trace of it appears in the inferior creation, there is no exertion of it about topics [purely moral : or, which is marked by that strength of conception displayed in the record of the fall. And with regard to *speech*, as the apostle Peter certainly intimates in his second epistle, a “ natural brute beast,” (or, one in his natural state,) is *alogos**—rendered in our version *brute*, or dumb, implying literally a total incapacity for verbal communication. And in a view of this attribute, it can be no objection to the thought, that the lack of speech on the part of the serpent, as learned by observation, is thought by some, a part of the curse inflicted on *him*. Not to say, that the idea is unsustained by an acquaintance with the animal, in other respects, it is a mere imagination ; there being nothing, in the only infallible account which we have of the curse, that contains an allusion to it of any description whatever.

* Chap. ii. 12.

But happily all debate on this point is foreclosed by the gospel revelation : for there a notice occurs, that must dissipate all doubt whatever in respect to it.

In the gospel of John, it is declared of Satan, that he was a *liar* and *murderer* from the beginning :* plainly, countenancing the received opinion, that by a falsehood, he persuaded man to disobey God ; and, by taking that step, became truly the author of his certain perdition. And what is there implied, is, as expressly declared by Paul, in his second epistle to the church at Corinth ; where he speaks of the serpent which beguiled Eve—meaning evidently in a respect to this matter, that *old serpent*, (as it occurs in the Book of Revelation,) which is *called the Devil*.† It appears then, that there was something more than a bare serpent, concerned in the temptation of our first parents ; and their disobedience to the requirement of an infinitely pure and benevolent Creator.

But at the same time, another query arises, from its alliance to this, that may deserve a momentary respect. It is this : Why should Satan desire any external agent, to help him forward in his design ? Why not tempt people, as he does now, without a third character in the plot ? by suggesting evil thoughts and purposes immediately to the mind. The inquiry is important, and may be answered, I doubt not, in a satisfactory manner.

We suppose then, that the reason lay not clearly in the impossibility, of presenting evil thoughts to the mind of a holy being ; or, any lack of ability on the part of Satan to adopt that course. On the contrary, we suppose, in this instance, that it was purely a mat-

* Chap. viii. 44. † Compare II. Cor. ii. 3. Rev. xii. 9, and xii. 2.

ter of *expediency*. That the course taken, was approved for the same grand policy, that marked the frequent appearance of holy angels under the former dispensation: as in regard to their sensible *forms*, it is well known that they assumed the appearance, and probably the reality of human nature, in order that they might hold more easy and unreserved intercourse with a sinful world. On the same principle, we shall not question, that Satan employed an outward agent; and thought to act more warily in this manner, by concealing himself, and his purposes under a garb. Why he pitched upon a serpent for this object, involves, perhaps, nothing very mysterious. For we must consider, that prior to the annunciation of a curse, there was nothing about the animal so very *noxious*, or, that excited aversion in the heart of man: so far from that—it might have been an object of unusual delight in the apprehension of our first parents, and been nourished by them with singular tokens of regard. But be that as it may, the serpent was probably near by at the unhappy moment: was a creature possessing a fine appearance: was endued with a nimble, adroit, and graceful motion and gesture:—and in this respect, if no other, was more congenial to the mind of Satan, because its chief glory was, as we are told, that it was more “subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.”

But in speaking of the tempter, who waylaid our ancestors in paradise, I must call your attention more pointedly to the *measures*, and opportunity he had of accomplishing his purpose: and very soon, you will see the compound he manifested of envy, hatred, and malevolence, displayed in acts of most daring presumption.

In regard then, to the *season* he preferred, of executing

his base design—it was undoubtedly the most auspicious for the object. He lost no time, it would seem, after Adam and Eve were put on trial; but made all possible despatch, lest the time of that trial should *expire*; and on exact compliance with the divine will, they should be instated in the favor of God forever and ever.*—He is thought also, to have commenced an attack on them, before they had intelligence of a rebellion in Heaven: or could, by any just medium of information, be impressed with the nature and effects of that

* It is not suggested in the above declaration, or, the idea supported in any form—that the dwellers of paradise certainly *fell* the very day of their creation. This has been thought by some. But while it is not asserted in the narrative, there is much that wears a different aspect. In respect to that point, it is plain, that on the evening of the sixth day, *every* thing, was pronounced very good; and from the work of creation, as it then was, God “rested” on the ensuing day, “and was refreshed.” But leaving that wholly out of view, I could add—that too much is reported as occurring *prior* to transgression, to make it very plausible. Of the incidents, which are detailed in the narrative, remark merely the following. 1. On the creation of man, a grant of food was made him; also, a qualified allusion to certain trees in paradise. 2. The inferior creation were assembled by God, and Adam gave names to every individual. 3. A “deep sleep” came upon Adam, and Eve is said to have been taken from his side. 4. When Eve was fashioned, the ordinance of marriage was celebrated in the instance of the first pair. 5. Dominion was given to Adam over every living creature on the earth. 6. God pronounced his gracious benediction on Adam and Eve; particularly, in regard to being fruitful and replenishing the whole earth.* From all which, and what could be enlarged upon, I am disposed to think, that sin did not enter the world, till a *sabbath*, at least, had been spent by man in innocency; and a certain trial was sustained of divine care and sympathy, that corresponds well with our sense of an advantageous probation.

See Van Mastricht. *De violatione Foederis Naturæ* LIB IV. Caput primum.

* Compare Gen. i. 29, and ii. 16, 17, and ii. 20, and ii. 23, and ii. 24, and i. 26, and i. 29.

unhallowed conspiracy.—It is believed in like manner, that he carefully met Eve aside from her husband : lest in the hour of temptation, the judgment *he* might form of his plan, should entirely baffle his intentions.— And it would also appear, that Satan commenced this parley with Eve, at a moment, when she was in full view of the prohibited tree. For as he accosted her, it is clearly intimated, that she cast her eye upon it—saw that it was good for food—pleasant to the eyes—and a tree to be desired to make one wise. Thus it appears, that the craftiness of the devil, was preeminently exerted, in fixing a train of circumstances, that should certainly achieve that terrible result.

But in regard to the *order*, or manner of the temptation, in the garden—nothing can exceed the consummate skill and ingenuity of Satan. The first step he ventured upon, was to shake the faith of the woman in regard to the divine *precept*—or condition of the covenant : and accordingly, he said unto the woman, we are plainly informed, *Yea hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?** As serious expositors are inclined to think, the adversary here, does not *deny* the precept flatly ; but he would insinuate the possibility of a *mistake* about it. Pause a moment, he says, and revolve it in your mind. Can it be, that in a grant so large and munificent, a particular fruit was *meant* to be excepted by Deity ? As derived from her husband—or a *knowledge* of the fact—a mistake might be, he imagines. And being purely a misconception at any rate, about what seemed plainly an article for use, he would not by any means represent it, as culpable. Now to all this, the woman unwarily replies, when she ought to

* Genesis iii. 1.

have fled from him without a moment's delay. And what is her answer? She said: *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But, of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die.** Thus she addressed the tempter, and having done so still remains by. And Satan therefore, finding a willingness on her part to hear his suggestions, improves every appearance; and without demurring, replies to her apparent scruple in that emphatic declaration, *Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.†*

Nothing can exceed the art displayed by Satan, in that rejoinder.

In the first place, he declares, *Ye shall not surely die.* However it be, he says, respecting the prohibition, I will not dispute—here, I am confident. He impugns therefore the just penalty of the law; and the terror with which its sanction is invested at the tribunal of Jehovah. And that, no doubt, was the true course for him to take in promoting his object. For in regard to that point, so far as Eve is concerned in it, it was purely a matter of *faith*. By sad experience or painful observation, she knew nothing, as yet, respecting the death in question. While in respect to every thing else, implied in the happy constitution under which she was placed, she may be said, to have had clear apprehensions of it; and attained both a speculative and experimental knowledge, of what was intended by her gracious Protector.

If this circumstance be well considered, in connexion with the instinctive aversion we possess to anticipating

* Genesis iii. 3. † Genesis iii. 4, 5.
8*

evil, we may not wonder so much, that Eve was inclined to hearken to his suggestions: and the more so—if, what some have intimated, has a proper foundation in *fact*, viz., an admonition of the serpent, that he had himself tasted of that fruit; and, so far from being hurt by it, in consequence of its surprizing virtue, he had actually attained a clear knowledge of things, and acquired a gift of communicating it readily in an articulate manner.

But again; the art of the great deceiver is more pathetically displayed in what immediately ensues: to wit, *For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.*

In this declaration, we have on the back of a barefaced lie, what can be considered only, an equivocation and scandalous hypocrisy. It was not enough for him to deny the penal threatening, and insult the justice of his Maker, but now he is all concerned for her welfare. And what method does he take to persuade her of his benevolent regards? It was just this. God commanded the first pair to abstain from a certain tree. And from respect *experimentally*, to the effect of regard, or disregard of his will, had given it a name; to wit, the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. But instead of viewing it purely in that light, as *was meant*, the tempter runs into an extreme, and would make it throughout a speculative consideration. And thus, perverting the very breath of the Almighty, he would have them think, that in eating the fruit, they would become wiser and happier than at present. Says the tempter—as in our version—“Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.” The word rendered

gods, is doubtless in the plural number, and translated with some regard to the angelic creation. But let it be noted, that the word rendered simply *God*, in the connexion, is always the same, and retaining the same form ; and being the common name to designate the Deity, is uniformly taken in that sense in the scriptures, unless the connection shall decide otherwise. This being the fact, and our first parents, being strangers comparatively to the angelic hosts, I think, with candid expositors, it should so run here : “Then shall your eyes be opened, and ye shall be as God”—or, like your Maker knowing good and evil. You will attain, that is, an exalted conception of things, and in the sudden expansion of your powers, shall rival the self-existent One, in knowledge, happiness and glory.

The assertion of the tempter, being delivered in a confident manner, which has often an effect ; being impressed frequently on a heart, free from guile, and wholly inexperienced ; and what is obvious—necessarily casting a slur on the policy of the glorious Creator himself, as being unreasonably selfish and partial—had the desired effect. A silent regard to the fruit, after infidelity had invaded her heart, led on inevitably, to a direct and open violation of the divine requirement.

As an author remarks : “It is evident on the whole, that the story, as related in Scripture, is either the close, epitome, or both, of a large description of the apostacy. Yet as it stands, it is a proof of consummate art, insidiousness, and fraud. The manner of address on the part of the serpent, is eminently adapted, to inspire and foment jealousy and irreverence toward God ; uneasy and repining thoughts of the condition, in which man was placed ; an ardent longing to be like an angel ; or rather,

like Jehovah himself, in knowledge, happiness and power; an earnest desire too, to eat the forbidden fruit to that end—with a lively expectation, that no bad effects, would actually result from the violation of a positive command.”

But I hasten *secondly*, to notice a certain thing, which is made conspicuous in the attempts of Satan to destroy the inmates of paradise.

This, I have said already, was the *fruit* of an interdicted tree; a tree, denominated by God himself, the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” As I remarked, it was called so, from respect experimentally, to the effect of obeying, or disobeying, the requirement of the Creator. If our first parents obeyed, the knowledge they had already of *good*, would be vastly increased. If the contrary, they would have a practical and painful experience of evil, and a new acquaintance, no doubt, with the value of the good that they had forfeited forever.

This being observed, I may notice in regard to this tree, a few particulars.

First: Of the *position* of the tree; and whether it be merely one, or actually a species.

With regard to its position, it is said, to have been planted in the “midst of the garden” of Eden;* not meaning the centre *exactly*, by precise admeasurement; since on that presumption, there must be a clashing here, with the description given of the “tree of life”; forasmuch, as that too, is said to have been planted, in the “midst of the garden.”† By the expression then, we understand simply, an interior part of the inclosure, the whole circuit of which may have included a spa-

* Genesis ii. 9. † Genesis iii. 3.

cious encampment. And this allowed, which is intimated in the narrative, we may judge, that either tree constituted more properly a *species*, than a single example. For surely, if they were designed primarily, for use and ornament too, it is natural to infer, that the object would be promoted the more efficiently, by producing a number of them, belonging respectively to the same order.

Again : In regard to the *nature* of it, or sort of fruit it actually produced.

An opinion has gone forth in the world, that the fruit in question, was certainly that, styled familiarly *the apple*. And without any reason for it, usually pretended, the origin of the notion, is consistently traced to a fanciful exposition of Scripture ; the interpretation of a passage in Solomon's Songs—which has no certain respect to it however, though it makes mention of a fruit passing by that name.† Others, however, from the bare existence of a *fig tree*, of whose leaves, Adam and Eve made themselves aprons, infer that, it, must have been the tree, from which they were enjoined to abstain conscientiously. But not to say, which is very natural, that they had hardly returned immediately to the very same spot, after their revolt—there is reason to imagine, that the nature of this fruit, is entirely unknown to any one in this age of the world.

In remarking to the point however, I would merely add by the way, that the Author of our being ordered it most likely, that the tree in question, as well as the tree of life, should never after, be a subject of curious, or solemn veneration to our depraved species. And accordingly, for the more effectual attainment of this end, we may suppose, that neither of these trees, had any

existence at all, out of that inclosure. This, to say the least, is a reasonable conjecture. But whether generally embraced, or not, the utter impracticability of searching for this fruit in our day, must be fully recognized, if we bear in mind, that not only a curse, which fell originally upon the earth; but subsequent to that period, a dreadful and sweeping deluge was experienced—in consequence of which, a destruction in the face of our globe, and particularly, of what relates to the vegetable creation, was most certainly accomplished.

And I go on, as purposed, in the last place, to speak of the *guilt* of our first parents, in yielding to the persuasion of the great adversary of our peace. This will appear to be *great*, without a particular comparison of it, with the sins of their offspring, placed in circumstances of a very different character.

The guilt of their delinquency must appear so, not only, from respect to the condition of the covenant—as expressing exactly the sense of the moral law—but, from other considerations, deserving at least a transient inspection.

It is evident then, from regard to the divine prohibition, considered purely, as a *striking symbol*: admonishing them in the first place, of their universal dependence on God, for every blessing which distinguished their lot; and, the sincerity and devotion, with which they should acknowledge any favor, dispensed by an Almighty hand: and again, reminding them, that the happiness of a moral agent, cannot consist mainly in the enjoyment of an inferior good: that nothing beneath the sun, is a perennial source of bliss; or in any manner, can fully satiate the evergrowing desires of the immortal mind.

It appears too, from an eye to the prohibition, considered fitly in relation to its *material*. In regard to the fruit of a tree—to say nothing of its nature, viewed merely as an external test—we may have a certain reference to its real value. And here plainly, no apology can be offered for a theft, which was committed in paradise! As some have remarked: earthly princes, in bestowing a patrimony on their subjects, not unfrequently exact a small *rent* of them; or, make a reserve, as a medium of proper regard, and a token of submission to regal authority. And surely, God may assert his prerogative, and claim at least, a paltry pittance, where he is pleased to dispense to creatures, his kindness with liberality. And considered in that light, the situation of our ancestor, in seizing the forbidden fruit, may be fitly compared to Esau, that profane and unthinking man, who, for a morsel of meat parted with his birthright.

But the guilt of the apostacy, appears, moreover, from respect to the *state*, or circumstances generally, in which the first pair were placed at the moment of their transgression.

In regard to those circumstances, you will retain at least the following.

At that important crisis, they had just received at God's hand an existence in the world; and for that existence, and their kind preservation, were indebted purely to sovereign grace: and if any thing could found a claim to unqualified subjection, an obligation derived from that source, must be admitted sufficient for the purpose.

They had also, been kindly exempt from the influence of bad example: plainly so, in the varied forms of *earthly* depravity:—and up to the moment, that they

were assailed by the tempter, cannot be allowed, to have had an inward relish or respect for the wages of iniquity.

They were endowed also, at the beginning, with all spiritual gifts and advantages. Blessed with the divine image, and extraordinary sagacity, they were fitted to hold sacred converse with the Father of lights—with holy beings in the present life—and with flaming spirits that pour their praises into the ear of the Eternal.

They had likewise the operations of conscience ; or that guide, which is termed in Proverbs, the *candle of the Lord shining in the soul*.* And with regard to *Eve*, it was evidently a sharp dictate of that sense, and one which they certainly resisted, leading her to say with that preciseness, *But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die.*

And to crown all, they were not only sustained by divine interposition, but from their earliest existence, the *benificence* of Almighty God, was displayed about them in a most lively and satisfactory manner. Every sense of the body, and every appetite of the mind—or faculty that they received—was consulted in the actual dispensations of Providence : and nothing was lacking, that could possibly add to their happiness, in the seasonable and abundant provision of their heavenly Benefactor.

Under such circumstances, their united offence displayed a daring impiety, that deservedly merited, at the hand of Jehovah, an exemplary punishment. They erred grievously. And if the question be asked, which was the worse offender of the two, it may not be easy

to answer it particularly. Yet, as the point is not unfrequently agitated, it may be fit to remark, that as the covenant of life, was made with Adam primarily; the condition of it, to wit, abstinence from a certain tree, laid upon him formally; and, as he stands forth in our perception, as federally sustaining, and actually deciding upon the fate of all his posterity—he may be considered in the sight of God to have committed more sin, and by the act of defiance, to have incurred a heavier responsibility, in regard to the effects of it in time, and its remoter consequences, on the experience of man through everlasting ages.

With these remarks, on the topics I named at the commencement, I will close, with some improvement of the subject, that may redound to your spiritual advantage.

In the first place, from the facts which have claimed a profound consideration, we learn something of the proximate origin of evil—or, the manner of *sin's introduction* into our world.

It appears then, from the experience of our first parents, and the angels likewise in a state of probation, that all accountable agents throughout the universe, are created, *naturally mutable*. In other words, the moment they are put on trial, with the motives to sin and holiness before them, it appears there is a natural possibility, as it may be, of their falling away or remaining steadfast. And while this is affirmed respecting them, if they *fall*, in no instance whatever, is the mutability spoken of, to be viewed as its proper cause: for though they may sink away, there is a natural possibility too, of their still enduring. The mutability I speak of, is only concerned with apostacy, as without it, there can

be no moral defection. Under any other aspect, it is no way implicated in the culpability of the fact.

To perceive the bearing of this, on actual rebellion against God, we should consider distinctly what is implied in the thought.

There is no disparagement then, offered by it to the divine image ; or, a true semblance of our Maker, impressed on the soul of man at his formation. This I conceive, may remain *certainly* ; and the creature at the very moment, be strictly mutable. What is implied in the suggestion, therefore, is a mere *imperfection*. And with regard to that point, it is not that which makes the precise difference between a sinful and holy being, but that rather, which makes a natural and essential difference, betwixt the creature and his adorable Creator ; between a being of finite capacity and one that is infinite ; so that while one is changeable, the other is unchangeable—while one retains his purity, the other may fall away and certainly perish.

Now, if you ask in what way, this bears on the sin of a being entirely *holy*, you may discover immediately, by confining your thoughts to a single specification.

In regard to Adam then, in the hour of temptation, it must be admitted, that his *knowledge* of things was very imperfect. And this imperfection, is not any thing, which formed a part of his sin and reproach, but that, which belonged to him as a being of finite capacity. He could not, that is, know every thing himself, and what he did meantime, he knew but partially. And with respect to the various objects, that he was actually acquainted with, it is equally plain that they could not be all present to him at once, as they are, to the understanding of the infinite One. His capacity would

not admit of it : and a bold disparity, therefore, must forever appear in that particular. From all which, however, you will quickly perceive, that in reference to the motives of sin and holiness, there might not be an equal representation ; or, if you will, an undue influence might be exerted over him, by one set of them, actually present to his apprehension. An historical fact fairly elucidated in regard to the apostacy : for an error in judgment, based on this very imperfection, was a principal incitement to the first transgression. You see it, especially, in regard to *Eve*. For the narrative declares, that revolving the thing in her mind, she saw not only, that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes—but in her own apprehension was desirable to make one *wise* ! What a sad mistake that ! And yet, acting on the faith of her own judgment about it, she perceived too late, that she was sadly deceived. In that respect, therefore, our first parents labored under a real, and apparently, I think, an insuperable difficulty.

But here, I know it will be said, that God had laid on them an express command respecting it ; and to that, they should have betaken themselves, without agitating its propriety. This, I readily grant ; and it is bringing the matter to some point ; for we shall certainly discover, that the sin of our forefather, in the *inception*, and as qualified by our apprehension of it, was rather a sin of omission. And yet, with this additional circumstance, I would reason in the very same manner. For if the mind of Adam was incompetent to view things, precisely as they are, and he erred in opinion—I may add, in regard to holy *wakefulness*, what is very apparent, that no finite thought or capacity, without divine help, can realize at once, all the motives which may in-

fluence to obedience ; while the motives to sin, and transient pleasure derivable from it, may be actually present to the creature's perception.

In view of the whole matter then, we may fairly decide, so far as it is made a thing of distinct meditation, that while Adam, on the one hand, was made perfectly free from sin—there was nothing done, save by himself, or his proper act, to mar the work of the Almighty. That he was deprived of no grace, for that purpose, which he had previously received. And the strength he had to gratify the temper, in himself considered, was only a copy of the strength he had to obey, being suitably inclined. On the other, it is plain, that our Maker did not vouchsafe that supernatural aid, which was required to keep him certainly from falling away. And that being the fact, under given circumstances, it was morally certain, not merely that he might, but that he positively *would* transgress the precept of his Maker : and so, it appeared in the sequel, and the consequences of it, are mournfully exhibited to our notice. And yet, if a query be strongly urged respecting it, we must answer, that God was infinitely *able*, and could easily have prevented Adam from turning an apostate. On a moment's consideration, we must easily perceive, how easy he might have kept Satan out of the garden : or, in regard to Eve, could have rendered her situation somewhat different : or, if you will press the point a little further, by an immediate influence of his Spirit, could have kept Adam from yielding to any temptation ; yea, done it with the same ease, no doubt, that Christ himself, was preserved from it in the wilderness, when the adversary tempted him there, to satisfy the appetite of hunger. In one way or other unquestionably, the apos-

tary could have easily been prevented by a proper device to that intent, if infinite wisdom had seen fit to premeditate it.

But since the case has turned out fatally the reverse, I think we may rest the inquiry here. And while on the one part, we believe that Adam sinned dreadfully, and would not palliate his guilt in any manner—yet, in regard to the immediate cause, or want of love, that led him to overlook a plain requirement of his Maker, I think we should pause; and not pry curiously into things, we have not seen, and with which, in our fallen state, we have no proper acquaintance whatever. I think it becomes us rather to confess, that here, is a “mystery of iniquity.” That the main point, or harmonizing a *state of feeling*, supposed to exist in a holy agent, with a palpable *sin* incurred by him, is beyond our depth to explain. And deeply impressed with the truth, we should be very willing, to view it plainly, on the whole, as an *ultimate fact* in the dispensations of Heaven. With meekness and unassuming temper, what we cannot descry, to piously allow. And as one has remarked on the subject, from a heart easily touched with a sense of its vileness—while we suffer the painful consequences of the act, and are thus conversant with its nature, “to adore the depth of the ways, and counsels, and inscrutable judgment of the Almighty.*

* The long agitated point, how a holy being *can* sin, and lose the favor of Heaven, has never been adequately explained. On that topic, I often admire the real modesty, expressed by the framers of the Shorter Catechism.

Quest. Did our first parents continue in the state, wherein they were created?

Ans. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will,

Again. From what has engaged your contemplation, we learn much of the *nature*, and effects of all sin, that should convey a note of alarm, to those who are living under its habitual dominion.

Wherever there is a sin, there is undoubtedly a temptation, let it spring from whatever source it may ; whether directly from the flesh, the world, or the devil, or all of them in concert. And in the commission of sin, we are tempted fundamentally alike ; one man like another, and all, like the first offender in the garden. In every temptation, *Satan* is the principal actor ; whether he operate simply by the depravity of the heart, or, through the instrumentality of wicked associates. And I may add also, that the same malicious pride, which he displayed in paradise, is the insatiate principle, that leads him to seek the ruin of us all. In every case, he acts the part of a murderer. And every temptation, which is fomented, directly or indirectly, by his influence, as far as it prevails, can only promote the diabolical *design*, by setting man at variance with his God, and cheating an immortal being out of heaven.

And with regard to every temptation, which the great adversary ever palmed upon us, the same motives, have almost invariably been addressed to the mind. The same disparagement to the divine goodness, has been

(that simply,) fell from the estate, wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

With regard to that freedom, or the nature of it, meantime, they do not hatch up a metaphysical distinction. They leave it just there—and wait for the light of a clearer intuition. Nevertheless, had those men of “excellent spirit” lived in our day, and witnessed the ease with which queries of this awful nature are dispatched in the periodicals, I deeply err, if they had not exclaimed with a peculiar sensation—*How superabundant the light !*

warily insinuated. The conduct of our Maker is commonly made to look strange, and apparently capricious. Some real good, is made to arise from transgression : and justified also, by mistake, or peculiar circumstances. And while the gains of iniquity, have been kept before the eye, and through that, designed to subdue the heart, no method has been left untried, or opportunity passed by, to provoke a discontent with the precepts of Jehovah, and the wisdom and purity of all his dispensations.

And what is forcibly urged on our notice, in the sacred page, will merit a particular meditation, viz., a common delusion, which seems to be co-extensive with the ways of iniquity—that there may be a *safety* in sin. That a man can wilfully transgress the requirement of his Maker, and flatter himself with absolute impunity ! This is a presentiment, which, in the early history of our race, was imbibed from the lips of the devil ; and without the teaching of that accursed spirit, had, perhaps, never been known to sinful men. For in a detailed account, which has been spread out to view, he said to the woman—and knew it was false—*Ye shall not surely die*. A story, propagated, at the first, by an heir of perdition : whose aching thought, was desirous to people hell, with millions of souls damned through his instrumentality ! I say, that he is the prime actor. He begun the tale. And thousands have repeated it after him, because they wish it to be true : nay, believe it sometimes, on one fortieth part of the evidence, or rather, even *plausibility*, that they would ask, to stake their whole fortune, in any secular scheme of advantage whatever. And they not only hearken to the rumor, but receive it gladly, from the lips of the vile and unprincipled. Will deride the simplicity of *Eve*, in her parley with the tempter,

and yet run after men, and hear them harangue on this topic, who are seldom fluent, except in places of unhallowed mirth; and whose companions, it is a fearful truth, are too often those, that fill the seat of the scorner, and who make it their principal *aim*, to sport with the opinions of the devout and excellent of the earth.

And what is most of all to be deplored, in regard to the slaves of sin and Satan, is the fact, that while some retain their confidence in the delusion, and act upon it perseveringly, others there are, who profess to be *orthodox* in their belief; and yet live, as if there were no God, or, if there is, whose awful purity would not be insulted by the sins they commit, in thought, word, and deed.

Now of this description doubtless, there are some present at this interview; who have tried to palm it on their own souls, that the wicked shall not be "turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Some, I fear, who not only cherish inwardly an ardent desire of the conclusion—but who are secretly at this moment, in consequence of it, halting between two opinions on the subject of salvation. And who, like our first parent, may find when it is too late, that they are sporting with plain truth, in order to their perdition. For if Adam sinned against God, by breaking a solemn covenant with him—what shall we say of unrenewed men under the dispensation of the gospel? Is not their case more deplorable than that of the first pair? If Adam sinned against *light* in eating that fruit—is it not more painfully true, that some among us, transgress the plainest requirement of the New Testament? while it is said, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;" nay, "he that believeth shall be sa-

ved, and he that believeth not shall be damned?" And if Adam sinned against the *goodness* of the Most High, and the most lively expression of pity and unexampled condescension—what shall we say of them, who can trifle with the gladsome tidings of redemption? Of a creature—who can resist the dying love of Jesus? Can not only despise his gospel, but, as brought home by divine influence, with new evidence to his mind, can do *despite* to the regenerating Spirit? Who, when he is earnestly besought to fly to the blood of sprinkling, that his guilty soul may be purified, delays the undertaking? Who can develope the vile depravity of his heart—his contempt of the most soothing accent of mercy—and plainly, "trample under foot," the purchase of a Saviour's expiatory groans!

My beloved hearers, the subject, that enlists our feelings, is one of most painful interest. If Adam sinned once, and by the guilt of that step, lost the favor of God, and *heaven* beside, what must be your condition, if called away at this crisis to render up a severe and final account? Bear it then, distinctly on your sinful hearts, that in the sight of a Being infinitely pure, and inflexibly just, you are condemned at this moment—not only like him for the first error, but for the second, the third, the fourth, and every instance in which you neglect to perform a commanded duty; to repent of your sins—to give away your hearts to God—and to consecrate all, which you have, to the service of the Being who made you. Let the thought be present, that the course you take is perilous in the extreme. That while you live in sin, you corrupt the well-spring of action. That you are becoming more and more unlike God, and every way like his enemy. And instead of preparing to meet

your Judge, while a habit of sinning prevails, you are only sinking deeper in crime. And in the consequence of this folly—as sure as God will avenge his cause—there is reason to think, that what is said of some in the Scripture, may be verified in your fate—*That their judgment of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

ORIGINAL SIN.

OF IMPUTATION.

DISCOURSE V.

Romans v. 19—For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Having discussed the nature of the covenant formed in paradise, and spoken of the leading facts displayed in its violation, we shall consider in the next place, the bearing of these points on the destiny of our race: or, the connexion properly between the sin of Adam, and the welfare of those embraced in the stipulations of the same agreement.

With regard then to the human family, as concerned in the consequences of his sin, its bearing on our state, is one of inexpressible interest. It is a theme, requiring not barely a sense of our weakness, and need of special influence from above, but some respect to various considerations, which have controlling influence on the mind: the effect of which is—however simple naked truth—to prevent an exhibition of it that may not be rendered useless to a painful degree. Respecting this intimation, nothing is more evident, than a diversity of conception on this subject, arising purely from different modes of *thinking and acting*. An effect displayed in other departments of knowledge; but particularly on topics of a *moral* nature. It is seen, for example, in the opinions entertained of *human* laws, which establish a connexion between the offence of a parent and

the disability of a child: though the custom of making children holden, in some instances, for the legal consequences of crime, is greatly insisted on. And in regard to that very instance—the case of a child in that state, as illustrative of my remark—though it be clear, that the child is not strictly *one* with its parent in the eye of the law, it is made no exception; but in harmony with the dispensations of Providence which connects the interests of children with the conduct of parents, and not unfrequently, very fearfully so, the principle is asserted, and has been interwoven with the policy of the most humane and enlightened governments upon earth.

But what deserves a careful meditation, we should approach the subject before us, with a lively sense of its mysterious character: not mysterious, in regard to the leading *facts*, but apparently so, no doubt, in respect to a solution of various difficulties arising from it; and which calls on the part of depraved and short-sighted beings for the profoundest abasement, rather than inquisitive meddling. We should approach a subject of this nature, admonished that in all God's works, there is much confessedly remote from apprehension. And if the fact be allowed, in regard even to the daily concerns of Providence, and what pertains immediately to the plan of salvation, we must perceive, that on an argument which involves the first principles of the divine administration, we need peculiar aid; and are entirely dependent on a God "that cannot lie," to clear up to our imperfect perception the equity of his own dispensations. And conscious of that dependence, yea, acknowledging it with gratitude, we should beware, in our attempts, lest the mind be drawn away from the *simplicity of Christ*; and reason alone, whether promising to make

us as gods, or piously stamped with the name of common sense, be the final umpire ; and undertake alone to settle in our weak apprehension the pregnant design of the Almighty. On this subject, above every other perhaps, we may say with an apostle, " For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counselor ? " And under a sense of our weakness, and the darkness that rests on the most eminent attainments, let us rather, triumph in the *fact*, that whatever we may adopt on the subject of inquiry, can only be confirmed by the plain and unerring dictates of the divine word.

In tracing the bearing of the first offence on the state of the species, it is important *first*, to explain the *doctrine* I shall advance on this occasion ; and having done so, I have purposed to establish it from the testimony of the sacred scriptures.

And first. In regard to a position, or doctrine, accordant with inspired truth. I will state it, as practicable, in a distinct and explicit manner.

In respect to the subject of our examination, the position we advocate, is the proper imputation of the sin, committed by our forefather to his natural offspring : or, that connexion between the first offence and threatened evil, springing from a like interest in the stipulations of a covenant engagement. I say, that springs primarily from that quarter. In our opinion, it is based properly upon it ; is explained by regard to the alledged stipulations of it ; and what is vastly important, can only be vindicated—I say not fairly—but vindicated at all, by respect to its real administration upon earth.

In regard to the term *impute*, as here employed, I observe in the outset, that a certain use of it in common life, is foreign to my purpose—its bearing particularly,

as touching the *motives* which govern our conduct, and then taken principally in a bad sense. A circumstance, you are aware, that causes the word to be applied here any way, with no small share of prejudice to oppose it. Yet, not wholly discarding a term for that cause, so extensively made use of, or, discovering meanwhile a bigotted attachment to it, I will state briefly—that in our understanding of the scriptures, the bearing of Adam's sin, as relating to his posterity, is twofold; or, his offence in violating the terms of a holy compact may be considered, either as *imputed*, or *inherent*; a distinction by the way, extensively adopted, and required in this place to a full disclosure of truth. But respecting the distinction, I may state, that we do not employ it, as suggesting a twofold *nature of the sin*, which may have a separate, nay, independent existence in the person to whom it is charged; but rather, as the terms insinuate—that the fault of our ancestor in its influence on the race, may be viewed under a *diverse* aspect; either, in regard to the legal desert of it, set down to their account, by an unerring judge, or, a depraved nature, imparted to his offspring by ordinary generation: and, in regard to either, flowing to his natural seed, as supposed, only, in the manner that I have expressly declared.

Now the connexion between the sin of Adam, and the state of his descendants, which makes the latter holden to the endurance of its *penal* effects, is the single point I shall assert in this discourse. And declaring the view entertained of it, it may be well, first of all—and in view of existing prejudices—to state particularly, what is *not* implied in our sense of imputation.

It is not implied in it then, that there is a community of *act*, as relating to that sin; or literal oneness with the

person of our first father. That were an absurd dogma, historically viewed; and we can safely imagine, was never sincerely embraced by any body. Yet the absurdity of it, is not more glaring, than its opposition to the relation, which Adam is thought to have borne to his offspring. With regard to that point, you are aware, it is twofold—natural and federal: the relation of a parent to a child; and again, of a representative to those included in the same bond. And to say nothing of the former at present, so far as the latter is respected, it is very obvious, that the bare profession of it, amounts to a flat denial of all personal sameness with our natural progenitor. Again: for the reason that this is piously insisted on, we add, that in the bearing of his sin, there is properly no transfer of moral character. Nothing, that is, implying a consciousness of transgression: or, any imaginable way, by which the race could, literally speaking, sin in Adam; and by an exertion of such agency, in the consequence of it, derive in their own experience a sense of personal ill-desert. And though some have discoursed unguardedly on the topic, who professedly adopt the same belief, it is quite untenable; for it is utterly at variance, either with fact, or any notion that we may indulge of the moral administration of the Creator.

And if this be denied in regard to our notion of imputation, and the query is raised, what is certainly embraced in the view taken of it, I answer, as intimated clearly—that the grand feature, is a *federal oneness* with Adam, in the stipulations of a covenant transaction; and consequently, a part with him in the first violation of it: a community of *interest*, rather than coëfficacy in the act, embracing the features of his fault, which become the relation of a representative, acting on behalf of those in-

cluded in the same dispensation. This is the prominent character it bears ; and every thing essential in its *nature*, in my view, can be made plain to the apprehension of a child. It is purely on the ground of this oneness, as subsisting truly between the Head and the members under a righteous constitution, that the sin of Adam is the sin of all ; and on principles of strictest equity, without any partiality conceivable—the actual desert of the first offence, is made in our perception, the certain property of every individual of our guilty race.

But in declaring what is implied in the doctrine of imputation, I remark in the mean time, that it is not material, whether the fact be clearly marked by the term *impute* in the sacred writings. Though a use of the word in that sense were denied, it can never disprove the thing itself. If the penal desert of that departure be set down in law-judgment to the species, it is nothing to the point, in what manner precisely, it is reported. In God's sight it is *charged*. And if proveable from Scripture, will confirm what is urged in respect to a covenant established with the first pair. But while I do not allow, that this use of the word is wholly foreign from Scripturæ, I may add, that the propriety of it, yet further appears, from its use on *other* subjects, where its application by the sacred penmen will not seriously be questioned. Of the latter, I will name an instance or two, which may be very suitable, in the outline I have attempted.

First. The word *impute*, is used in the New Testament, in ascribing acts to an individual, which are not properly his, but *putatively*, or in a law dispensation. Of this description, is the case of Paul, in regard to Onesimus. For writing to Philemon, on behalf of the latter,

he apprehends, that his master might have a *double* action against him : that he might table a charge against him of debt and of trespass ;—declaring, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account* : Or, as the word is elsewhere translated, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, impute it to me*.* A use of the term, which is fairly concerned with its propriety on the subject of inquiry. For though it pertain to a civil transaction, if civil justice, be a part of moral justice, there is a radical likeness here ; which may serve in some measure, to illustrate the moral fitness of the sentiment maintained.

Again. Another use of the word in Scripture, is very important. It is this : When sin is imputed in the Bible, it is not so much with an eye to a sense of ill-desert, as it is, with a primary respect to its *punishment*. An example of what I intend, is the following : Says David, *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity* :† that is, whose iniquity, instead of being avenged, is actually forgiven. Also, the prayer of Shimei to David, saying, *Let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me* :‡ that is, inflict on me personally, deserved wrath, for an offence that I have rashly incurred. And this being the manner, in which the word is freely applied in this connexion, it may serve in regard to usage, to settle the *propriety* of retaining it in existence ; and of vindicating it in like manner, from what appears a most unwarrantable deduction.

But from what I have proposed on the subject of our discussion, you cannot mistake, what in our opinion, is implied in an honest view of imputation ; or fearful connexion between the first transgression, and a threatened

* Verse 19. † Psalms xxxii. 2. ‡ II. Samuel xix. 19.

calamity that has visited our race. That it arises in our impression, not from a personal identity with a third, and responsible character—but from something more intelligible—a similarity of personal *standing* in a covenant. And the relation between the Head and members being a federal one, as I have asserted, the imputation referred to, as some have distinguished it, is not only mediate, but it is *immediate*: is displayed, that is—not only in the propagation of innate depravity, but the direct ascription of that, which infers in law-procedure, the entire recompence of transgression. A principle of the divine administration, as adopted in this instance, not only easy of comprehension, but, as I think, which is not remote from what occurs in experience, or is witnessed in the most common transactions of life.

So far from it, I may add, that the agency which Adam exerted, and by which in a public relation, he governed the destiny of all, is only that, which is met with every where. Is that precisely, in regard to its *principle*, by which every corporate body on earth moves, the proceedings of which are based upon a common charter, and who are in the habit, of transacting any part of their affairs, through the medium of a special deputation.*

* From the Harmony of Confessions referred to at the commencement I insert barely the following.

THE CONFESSION OF BOHEMIA OR THE WALDENSES.

“The grace of God and those good gifts of justice, and the image of God, which in his creation were engraved in him, he partly lost them, and partly corrupted and defiled them, as if, with horrible poison, one should corrupt pure wine, and by this means, he cast headlong both himself and all *his offspring* into sin, death, and all kind of miseries in this life, and into punishments eternal after this life.”

ARTICLES OF DORT.

“Their sense is strongly declared by the Synod who drew them up,

But I will not detain you longer on this part of my subject : and I go on to establish the *fact* of such an imputation, by a respect to the word of God.

With regard to the testimony of the sacred volume, I call your attention in the first place, to the *text*, and a part of the very chapter, from which the text is taken. For the moral demonstration, of which it is the sum, begins more formally with the 12th verse, and is prolonged to a very serious termination.

From the text then, and what immediately precedes in the chapter, *generally viewed*, we derive presumptive proof in favor of the sentiment advanced ; and draw it plainly from the fact, that such *exclusive importance*, is there attached to the first sin, that was ever committed

when "noticing some perversions of it, they reject the error of those who hold that, "It cannot properly be said, that original sin, (peccatum originis) suffices of itself, for the condemnation of the whole human race, or the desert of temporal and eternal punishments : For they contradict the apostle, who says, *Rom. v. 12.* "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And verse 16th, "By one man the offence entered unto condemnation."

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

"They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was *imputed*, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generations."

THE SAVOY CONFESSION.

"They being the root, and by God's appointment standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was *imputed*, and corrupt nature, conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generations."

From the testimony of eminent writers, I will insert two or three plain examples.

"So the sin of *Adam* while he was a public person, and represented his whole posterity is imputed unto us all, as if we had committed that actual sin."

in our world. In regard to this point, we find in a range of five verses, a testimony of this emphatic description. It is said, for example: *If through the offence of one, many be dead. The judgment was by one to condemnation. If by one man's offence death reigned by one. By the offence of one judgment came on all men to condemnation. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.** And the prominency given in the singular number, to a single act of our forefather, indicates strongly his relation to mankind. It argues more than the influence of a natural parent. As in virtue of *that* relation, merely *natural*, his posterity had been equally concerned in the sins he incurred after the first; and the disability which de-

Again. "Adam's sin, as imputed to us, is not the sin of a representative, though it be, of him that was so; but is the particular sin of every one of us."—*Owen on Just.* p p, 376, 380.

Referring to the 5th chapter of Romans, J. Edwards remarks.—"The doctrine of the corruption of nature as derived from Adam, and also the *imputation* of his first sin, are both clearly taught in it. The imputation of Adam's one transgression, is indeed, most directly and frequently asserted. We are here assured, that *by one man's sin, death passed upon all*; all being adjudged to this punishment, as having sinned (so it is implied) in that one man's sin."

Again. "It seems to me fully manifest, that none can in good consistence with themselves, own a real imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity, without owning that they are *justly* viewed, and treated as *sinners*, truly guilty, and children of wrath on that account; nor, unless they allow a just imputation of the whole of the evil of that transgression;—at least, all that pertains to the essence of that act, as a full and complete violation of the *covenant* which God had established; even as much, as if, each one of mankind had the like covenant established with him singly, and had, by the like direct and full act of rebellion, violated it himself."—*Original Sin*, pp. 400, 462.

"Adam, by divine appointment, stood and acted as our public head. He stood a representative, in the room of all his posterity; and accordingly, acted not only for himself, but for them. His sustaining this char-

* Verses 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19.

volved on them, had been rather the accumulated effects of their parent's wickedness to the day of his death. But that is no view, which is fostered by the strain I have adduced. And the expression of the apostle, taken at first sight, must convey an impression, that Adam sustained a higher relation to them; and by reason of which, his natural offspring come to share respectively in the legal maladies of that fatal delinquency.

This being the impression made on the mind, by a bare notice of scripture, it may be profitable to examine a portion of the 5th chapter of Romans with some detail.

We begin then with the 12th verse. It runs thus: *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

But in coming to a fair examination of this passage, and the reasoning pursued in what follows it, I remark, that from the 12th verse the apostle contemplates, and in the sense of it virtually *institutes*, as appears in the sequel, a noted parallel between Adam and the Savior.

acter, rendered him a type of Christ, the *second Adam*, who has laid down his life in the room and stead of sinners. And his being spoken of in Scripture, as a type of Christ, with respect to this character of a public head, proves that he did actually sustain such a character. *Rom. v. 14.* And, therefore, as by the obedience of *Christ*, many are made righteous; so, by the disobedience of Adam, many are made sinners, ver. 19th, i. e. by the imputation of Christ's obedience, believers become legally righteous in the sight of God, by virtue of an established constitution; and so have the reward of eternal life. So, by the imputation of Adam's first sin, his posterity, by ordinary generation, became legally *sinners*; sinners in the sight of God, by virtue of an established constitution, and so are exposed to the punishment of eternal death, the proper wages of sin. Now, it is true, we did not *personally* rise in rebellion against God in that first transgression, but he, who did do it was *our* representative."—*Bellamy's Works* vol. i. p. 301.

One, describing either of them, as the Head of influence to other agents. And with respect to the former, what is uttered, is naturally suggested by the epistle itself. For in what precedes this chapter, the apostle had not only described the universal corruption of our race in darkest character ; but viewing it, not merely in itself considered, but also, as connected with justification by the merit of Jesus Christ; first, under the Jewish dispensation, and again, in the times previous, as in the case of *Abram* ; it was natural, in that instance, that proceeding a step further, he should rise in imagination to the source of all our misery : and from the character of its origin, if ought appeared, derive any thing whatever, that might explain the manner in which its removal is effected in the glorious history of redemption.

But of the nature of this parallel, we may have express information by and by. And I go on with a consideration of the statement of Paul ; to wit, *Wherefore as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin, and so (even so) death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

To shew what bearing this assertion has on the imputation of the first offence, you may fix an eye particularly on the following suggestions.

First. In regard to those who sin, here styled *all men*, though it be granted, there is a special regard to *actual* transgressors before God, as some may strongly insist, I can see nothing in the nature of the epistle, or phraseology itself, but it *may* intend all mankind : may embrace every one that is born of woman, though in the earliest period of infantile existence. And as Witsuis observes, if taken in that sense, it will impart an energy to the apostles declaration : yea, leaving out a proper

syllogism, or any respect to it whatever, far more I imagine, than to represent him as merely saying, "That like as the sin of Adam is followed by death, so, the actual offence of his posterity is attended by the same consequence!" Which is a very tame assertion, to come from the lips of one, whose mind was teeming with new discoveries of our state, and of the nature of redemption by an almighty Mediator. Again: the effect of this sinning, as given in the *past tense*, indicates a responsible connexion with our forefather. He says, *Death passed upon all men for that all have sinned*. As Owen remarks: "Death passed on all men, for that all have sinned. Death on the first entrance of sin *passed* on all; that is, all men became liable and obnoxious to it, as the punishment due to sin. All men that ever were, are, or shall be, were not then existent in their own persons. But yet were they all of them, *then*, upon the first entrance of sin, made subject to death, or liable unto punishment."* And finally: corroborative of this statement, it is believed, that the fact of sinning in a final Head, is plainly taught in the last clause of the passage. And with respect to that member of it, though it be variously rendered; either, for example, "*for that all have sinned*," or otherwise, "*in whom all have sinned*," we shall not abandon the impression. But in deciding the mind of the apostle, I intimate, that in harmony with the prevailing sense of the church in an earlier period, we conceive that the latter is the fair construction of his words; the exact and honest translation of it;—not to say in fact, what all readily confess, that the proposition *eipi* is often used by the sacred penmen

* See on *Justification*.

as synonymous with *en*, and in the writings of the New Testament is rendered accordingly.*

In reference to the verse that immediately ensues in the chapter, viz., *For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law*, I barely notice, that whether the sin imputed or reckoned here, be ours antecedently to it, or is made so by the *fact*, will equally suit the exposition of what preceeds. And without delay, therefore, I shall summon your attention to the meaning of the 14th verse of the chapter.

The words are : *But (nevertheless) death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

In the declaration I have named, two ideas invite your very serious meditation.

First. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam. The very exception here found, viz., the likeness of Adam's offence, supposes that they had sinned in some other manner ; and for the obvious fact, that "death by sin" is a connexion clearly observed. And if you ask what the likeness of his offence may be, or rather, what is implied in not offending, as he did, I answer then—That death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned *personally* like him, and still less, in the particular circumstances of

* With regard to the use of these terms, as often equivalent, the reader may glance for a partial illustration at, Matt. xiii. 14, xxiv. 30. Mark vi. 25, xi. 4. Luke i. 47, xi. 22. Rom. v. 2, viii. 20, ix. 23. I. Cor. ix. 10, xiii. 6. Heb. i. 2, ix. 10, ix. 26. Notice its use particularly in the following, Matt. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 10. and Acts ii. 38, as compared with Matt. xviii. 15.

the act itself. A statement, from which it is inferred, that he had a particular regard to the case of infants : for though chargeable with no actual fault, they die ; and suffer the penal consequences of sin. An historical fact, which must have engaged his feelings, as his mind reverted, in the very period that he names, to an awful destruction of them by the deluge ; and on another occasion, to what is mournfully revealed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the populous cities of the plain.

Again : a query of alarming import is immediately suggested to the mind, to wit, In what way is the early death of these beings, reconcileable with the principles of the divine administration ? A sober intimation, to which Paul replies, as I imagine, in stating a fact of unbounded importance, viz., that " Adam was a figure of him that was to come." In the original *typos*,—a type or figurative representation of Jesus Christ : of one who was early predicted of, and even by his personal foes on earth, familiarly conversed about, as an extraordinary personage that was *to come*.

But in respect to a type, taken fitly as such, it will be admitted, that it must typify something in a manner, which no other *person* or *thing* does. And if that feature be retained in regard to this declaration, and no shadow of cause appears why it should not, I ask, is not the application of it evident ? If any can doubt it for a moment, I ask then, in what respects could Adam be a type of the Savior ? Was it barely in the fact of possessing humanity, a true body and rational mind ? That can hardly be insisted on. Sure I am, there is nothing peculiar in that presumption. Was it then, in virtue of a relation which he sustained to some other

agent ; or any part, whether of the material or spiritual creation ? It is equally vain to pursue the inquiry any further. And we come therefore to the necessary conclusion, that he could not have typified our gracious Lord but in a public relation, as the proper representative of his own descendants. That as Christ acted on behalf of his people, obeying, dying, and rising again for them, *he* assumed, in compliance with the will of God, the weal or woe of his natural offspring. And while the one party was in Adam naturally, as the other party was in Christ supernaturally ; as connected with the event of their agency, in a specific regard to its nature, the former communicated a curse while the latter communicates, undoubtedly, a blessing to his seed.

And while life and death, misery and happiness, are respectively conveyed by these Agents, there are two things to be *distinctly* urged in regard to this explication. First : that the curse and blessing, in respect to their proper essence, or primary end, are not the same thing ; and with an eye to perspicuity, as concerned in the parallel alluded to, must not be confounded. As President Edwards remarks : " The one is spoken of simply as good, the other as evil : one as the effect of righteousness, the other of an offence ; one as the fruit of God's favor in consequence of what was pleasing and acceptable to him, the other of the fruit of his displeasure in consequence of what was displeasing and hateful to him ;—the latter coming by justification, the former by the condemnation of the subject."* And the distinction between them, though disregarded by some in our day, must be understandingly retained in the exposition of that epistle. Again : in regard to the mode

* ORIGINAL SIN. *Exposition of the 5th of Romans.*

of conveying these properties respectively to our ruined race, so far as the *plan* is touched, it was the same undoubtedly in both cases. It was purely a representative transaction; and by no exposition of acknowledged facts, can be presented to the human mind in any other light. And as the value of obedience is strictly imputed in the one case, so the penal desert of transgression is reckoned in the other. As the ill-desert of Adam came even on infants who are incapable of sinning, so it is plain, the obedience of Jesus Christ is set down to his people irrespective of any personal merit. And as this is the only way in which our blessed Master conveys life and happiness in the economy of grace, we infer, it is that alone, in which Adam can be acknowledged a type of Christ, if in any respect he can be said to have typified him at all.

But this exposition of an important declaration of the apostle, will be greatly confirmed by a regard to the 18th verse: for what is justly implied in the preceding part of the chapter, is there made a point of express development. It is this: *Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.*

“By the offence of one judgment came on all men,” &c. Or, as appears from a close adherence to its phraseology, all men are brought under a condemnatory act, purely in virtue of the first transgression. The apostle names an effect; and also, assigns a cause that is commensurate with it. And from the most impartial survey of the terms, he adopts, it appears to our entire conviction, that the doctrine of strict imputation is asserted here in a most unequivocal manner.

Yet, if any doubt existed in respect to it, I should suppose, it must be entirely dissipated by regard to the word *katakrima*—translated condemnation. It is a term of decisive import, and used plainly in a forensic acceptation. In relation to its bearing, if any thing could denote an effect produced by the imputation of sin, this is the word. And considering that there is no evidence of its use in any other sense in the New Testament, but always in this manner; if it be correctly applied in this instance, as all admit, that acknowledge an “inspiration of God,” it substantiates the point that I have aimed fully to illustrate.*

And giving a brief outline of what is contained on the subject, in the chapter from which the text is taken, it is proper to give the *text* itself a distinct notice: and the more so, it will recur to you, because it is formally drawn up, as the conclusion of some regard to the par-

* With regard to this passage, I observe that the phrase, *judgment came*, is not in the Greek, but is supplied from verse 16th. Accordingly, as the form of it looks back a piece, some prefer a resort to the 12th verse, and in the room of that clause would substitute *ἡ ἀμαρτία εἰσῆλθε*—*sin entered*, &c. But so far as I perceive, in a close view of the original, it amounts to the same thing; and equally implicates the whole race in the just desert of that delinquency. Yet, in respect to the 16th verse, it is worthy of consideration what is intimated by Guyse, That nothing can be more pointed, or simple in construction, than the energetic clause, *το κριμα ἐξ ἐνός εἰς κατακριμα*, viz., *the judgment was by one to condemnation*. For *katakrima* is not only used forensically, but it must be confessed that *krima*, signifies properly, not an act of mere sovereignty, or, the natural consequence of sin, but a legal sentence on its account. It supposes a law-charge of guilt; or such concern in the sin, as in a moral understanding, makes it some way ours. And on this footing, if there be any meaning in words, a penal sentence is here righteously pronounced, and executed in some manner upon all Adam's seed.

The various forms of the same root, where an affinity of sense appears, confirms this statement; as, for example, *Τίς ὁ κατακρινών*,

allel inviting our solemn attention. The words are:
For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,
so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

In a true exposition of this passage, I will merely advert to some leading considerations.

The word rendered *made*, I may remark, has commonly in the gospel the sense of constitute. I can name a fair example of its use. It is said then: *Who made [constituted] me a judge or divider over you?** Again: *He shall make [constitute] him ruler over all his goods.†* Further: *The law maketh [constituteth] men high priests which have infirmity.‡* And its prevailing use in the gospel, to say the least, as denoting a single act or measure that is purely official, is no despicable idea in regard to its bearing on our sense of imputation.

Again: those who take a different view of the passage, destroying its *putative* character entirely, are certainly at war with the phraseology of inspired truth. Nor is it difficult to make this point clear to the understanding. For if an imputation of the first offence be denied, and its influence accounted for, by supposition, merely through example, imitation and the like; I assert plainly, it is incongruous with the style of Scripture, to speak of any becoming sinners in that manner as *made*

Who is he that condemneth? Rom. viii. 34. Also, *Akaraxptros*, in Acts xvi. 37, and xxii. 25, &c. So that if *krima*, according to the suggestion of Guyse, signifies judicium in general, yet, in connexion with *kata*, as a compound term, it signifies what may be fitly termed, judicium adversus aliquem, or condemnation.

Doubtless, any minister of the gospel, who would explain the scriptures in a regard to the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, so far as this topic is named, would be admitted by his fellow disciples and helpers in Christ to be thoroughly orthodox!

* Luke xii. 14. † Matt. xxiv. 47. ‡ Heb. vii. 28.

or constituted such. It can easily be shown, that it is a perfect anomaly in the sacred volume; nay more, there is no shadow of proof derived from that source which can be made to *countenance* it. I am aware indeed, what is said of Jeroboam, that by an influence of the like sort he made Israel *to sin*. But that is not the same, I humbly conceive, as saying merely that they were *made* sinners. Very far from it indeed, if I mistake not: and least of all, by the influence of example that may be predicated of the first sin; an act committed thousands of years ago; and the person to whom it is properly charged in the sight of Heaven, confessedly unknown to any considerable part of the entire human family!

Further: it is no fair objection to this view of the passage, that men are found sinners, by the imputation of what is not a personal quality. Even in that light, the phrase, as employed with that intent, is not singular in human affairs: and I may add, what is worthy of respect, is not without a parallel instance on the inspired page.* But be this as it may. Whether a customary use of the phrase, or not, is immaterial. In the present case, not only the connection dictates it, but the *antithesis* of our text certainly requires it. And if the terms *righteousness*, *condemnation*, and the address generally that comports with it, be used in this chapter as in other parts of the epistle—that is, in a forensic bearing—it appears not only that the righteousness of Christ is truly imputed to believers, but the sin of Adam is ascribed to his offspring

* Kings i. 21. *Otherwise it shall come to pass when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.* That is, shall be dealt with *as if*, or whatever is right in itself, be made in *law-judgment*, to sustain the character of them that are certainly in a fault.

in the very same manner : and if the effect of the former, as concerned with final acceptance before God, is a justification *of life*, as declared, it is very obvious, that the penal desert of the latter is everlasting death. And on no other principle, can the idea of *made* or constituted sinners be received, in my opinion, without seriously embarrassing an inquiry into this matter. In no other light can it be viewed, without enervating the apostle's argument ; throwing a dreadful mist on *this chapter*, as well as its connexion with the whole epistle ; and what is worse than all, yea ever to be regretted by us—manifestly depreciating the merit of that satisfaction, to violated justice, which was made in the law-place of the despairing sinner, by our highly exalted, yet infinitely compassionate and condescending Redeemer.

This, we conceive, is the mind of the Spirit, in the chapter to which your attention has been particularly referred.

In connexion with an exposition of the apostle's meaning in that place, I cannot dismiss the testimony from the word of God, without some respect to one or two declarations which have a bearing on the subject of our discussion.

In the first epistle to the Corinthians, we meet with a testimony of decisive import. It is this : *For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.** •

In regard to the *all* spoken of by the apostle, whether it be literally, all of our *guilty race*, or, the all simply of *believers*, of whose resurrection he is there discoursing, will not be inquired after. Thus far it is admitted, that the death of all men must be traced in *some* manner to the apostacy of Adam. And if the inquiry arise, in what

* Chap. xv. 22.

manner one fact, is certainly made the consequence of the other, the apostle explains it, by drawing a parallel between Adam and Christ, in regard to a dispensation of life and death. And in respect to the latter, as life is derived from Jesus as a public person; in virtue of the counsel of peace, and an eternal assignation; and in the administration of a new covenant, by the direct communication of saving influence, so again, the comparison implies, yea, the very terms of the Greek, that death must be derived from Adam in virtue of a federal relation to mankind: that as the merit of the latter is set to our account by a real imputation, the demerit of Adam is laid to our charge in the same manner. And in respect to the former, or relation sustained by our first father, as such imputation is equally direct with the other, the apostle declares with propriety, that we *die* in him. And dying thus, it is said correctly, however unpalatable to some, that we *sinned* in him. For to a demonstration it will appear, either as an instance of sound logic, or the fair interpretation of Scripture, that this is the sense of the place, if the simple exposition of his declaration, dictated by the parallel itself, shall be fully sustained.*

Nor can it be a trifling supplement to the reason-

* From explanatory notes by Fraser, annexed to an edition of *Witsius* on the Creed, I extract an elegant comment.

"The words in the original," says Dwight, "are *ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ*, and *ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*. The Greek preposition *ἐν* signifies very often, as any person acquainted with the language must have observed, exactly the same with the English phrase *by means of*. The passage would therefore have been explicitly and correctly translated: *As by means of Adam all die, even so by means of Christ shall all be made alive*. Adam is therefore only asserted here, to be an instrumental cause of the death specified," &c. Now that the preposition *ἐν* does not unfrequently signify *by means of*, or simply *by*, as *Dr. Macknight* has thought proper to

ing founded immediately on the passage, what is certainly deduced from an idea succeeding this important intimation: For the apostle, as you know, and no doubt, with a primary respect to the *believer*, winding up an argument for a future resurrection, based fearfully on the representative character of Christ, adds: *The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.** For in a proper view of what is intimated, I would barely ask—In what respect is Christ termed the second man? In reply to the query, we say then, not in virtue of any private character that he sustained. As to his *person*, he was more than mere man: and in relation to humanity itself, was born after an interval of time, in which millions of human beings had enjoyed a fading existence upon earth. In no other manner therefore, is he properly styled the second man,

render it in this same verse, is readily admitted. But the native and ordinary sense of the preposition, is confessedly *in*; and it should be inquired, whether the connexion of the words, and the scope of the passage, do not render it more probable that the preposition ought to be rendered so in this verse, than that it should be translated either *by* or *by means of*. That *ev* when connected with *τω Χριστω*, and with other names and characters of the Savior, should in no case be rendered *by means of*, we shall not affirm. But "any person acquainted with the language" of the New Testament "must have observed," that in a vast majority of instances where *ev* is thus joined with *Christ*, it would be highly improper to render it in any other way than by the English preposition *in*. A few expressions from the epistles to the *Corinthians* may suffice for examples: "But of him are ye *in* Christ Jesus"—"If any man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature"—"I knew a man *in* Christ."* The expression *ev Χριστω* occurs even twice just preceding the passage under consideration. Why then ought we not to retain this instance, as it stands in the common version; "For as *in* Adam all die, even so *in* Christ shall all be made alive?" The apostle had said in the verse

* I. Cor. xv. 47.

or Adam, than from a circumstance, common only to him and our progenitor. And if that he resolved into a public relation sustained by Adam as a type, and that is fulfilled in the person and office-work of the Mediator, all is very plain ; and in a full investigation of the subject, the mind is relieved at once, from what appears a most unwelcome uncertainty.

And on that ground, I may observe, that what immediately follows the declaration just named, will possess an unrivalled interest. No pen can certainly describe, or mortal tongue express, the grandeur of the thought. For as these Agents are named, and the parties which they fitly represent are ranged by their side, the design of mercy is tenderly appreciated. The light of eternity breaks in on the prospect, and to the ear of faith, the truth is uttered with rapturous emotion :

immediately preceding : “ For since *δι ἀνθρώπου*, *by* man came death, *δι ἀνθρώπου*, *by* man came also the resurrection of the dead.” He had thus already taught that *by*, *through*, or *by means of* man death came, and also the resurrection of the dead. He had already shewn that Adam is “ an instrumental cause of the death specified,” and that the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God in human nature is the author of that blessed resurrection which awaits the just. When he proceeds to his next sentence, he changes the preposition in both its parts. In place of *δι*, *by*, *by means of*, he says *ἐν*, *in*. That he alters the preposition merely for the sake of variety of expression, ought not readily to be conceded. Is it not much more probable that the design of the apostle, and of the Spirit by whom he was inspired, was to throw additional light upon this subject, and to suggest something relative to the *manner* in which death comes by the one man, and the resurrection by the other ? Is it not clearly intimated, that Adam was not merely “ an instrumental cause of death,” but that we died *in* Adam as our common root and federal representative, in whom we sinned and so became liable to death ?—This view of the meaning divests the passage of every appearance of tautology.—Vol. II. p. 495.

* I Cor. i. 30, ii. 1, iv. 17. II Cor. v. 17, xii. 2.

*As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly.**

But again. Another declaration is found in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians; affirming, in respect to himself and other believers, that they were *by nature children of wrath even as others.*†

If your attention be turned to the phrase *child of wrath*, it implies in our apprehension, not barely a vicious inclination anterior to sinning, but something in the very act, exposing a being to the penal displeasure of the Most High. In regard to the sense of it, you must be aware, that it is synonymous with the phrase, *son of perdition*. And conveys an impression, that the creature in that predicament is liable, not merely in moral equity, but by a *judicial infliction*, to a certain and righteous displeasure of God against human folly.

Again: In respect to the phrase *by nature*, as designating the time when the danger is first impending, I may state, that it cannot be explained to mean barely this, viz., that prior to their professed conversion to christianity, they sustained *really*, or without mistake, the character reported. For however pleasing the interpretation may be to many, there is no ingenuous mind but will confess, that it is not a fit usage, to render that information observably emphatic. Indeed, those who take this stand, very consistently resolve the depravity of man, purely into *acquired habit*; as if, from its early and settled influence, it might be denominated in some manner a *second nature*. But in reply to that assumption, I could name a variety of considerations. I could

* I. Cor. xv. 48, 49. † Eph. ii. 3.

urge in regard to this very passage, that Paul having spoken of his "conversation in time past," seems to rise to an earlier date in passing on to the place before us. But dispensing with it in this relation, I will only remark, that by the phrase in question, is intended plainly in the gospel, a natural effect; or, what appears simply through a uniform *law of being*. In this sense you must understand it, when it speaks of one that is a *Jew by nature*;* of an *olive tree wild by nature*;†—and of them that *by nature are no gods*.‡ And doubtless, if a vicious propensity, apart from open transgression, can justify this wrath, even in the case of new born *infants*, it is no uncharitable presumption, if I urge at least, that a major part of the curse, connected with the bare existence of a child, should be ascribed to a representative error: for while it gives the passage an easy exposition, it is that alone, that may possibly consist with the impression made by it on any unprejudiced mind.

I may add, the spirit of it agrees with the sense of our English Poet—

——In me, all posterity stands cursed!

Fair patrimony that I must leave ye, sons.§

With this exposition of the sentiment advanced, I remark in conclusion, that not only under a *doctrinal aspect* is it capable of illustration, but there is nothing whatever in the inspired record, that respects our race as lost, yet the subjects of divine commiseration, that may impeach the evidence I have insisted on. On the contrary, as connected more especially with the treatment of *unrenewed sinners* under a dispensation of mercy, there is much, that taken in a different light, may serve to corroborate the doctrine I intended scripturally to ex-

* Gal. ii. 15. † Rom. xi. 24. ‡ Gal. iv. 8. § MILTON.

plain.—The state in which our race is left by a violation of the old covenant, is obvious. It is one of *condemnation*. And respecting the covenant itself, in the precise form it was declared, we grant, that in the enforcement of its sanction, all embraced in its terms, are under it in an *absolute form*. But if a distinction is made in that covenant between its natural and positive state, which is often done, it is evident as to the *condition*, that we may separate what is accidental in it, from what is essentially binding in its spirit: that is, what is *positive* in the bare enforcement of a precept, from what is purely *moral* that respects the aim of its requirement. No doubt, the condition of that covenant, materially considered, was perfect and unceasing compliance with the law of Heaven.

This admitted, we see no cause, why sinners of mankind are not ushered into the world, under the entire bond of that covenant: why they come not under it in a *natural state*, as certainly, for example, as Christ was made under the very same law, and in a federal form, obeyed it on the behalf of a peculiar people: and until they escape from its grasp, are bound as sincerely to observe its requirement, as they are personally to endure its awful penalty. In favor of the idea, one or two considerations may be very decisive.

It is a fact then, that sinners in their natural apprehensions, are under the law of Jehovah in a covenant form; and all the effort they make to secure an interest in the divine favor, is based entirely on that supposition. And whether the conviction be ascribed solely to their depravity, or a state of things corresponding with fact, it is very plain, that they are not under the law of God *merely*, as a rule of manners in the hands of Christ; as

Paul intimates—*not under the law but under grace* :* for they have yet no just acquaintance with the sense of the gospel, nor have given the consent of a wicked heart, to the aim of a more benevolent dispensation.

Again. They are not only there in their own imaginations, but are dealt with on the same principle, in what relates actually to their *preparation* for a future world. Of proof that may be advanced in favor of the impression, I will name an example or two.

As respects then the transaction of Mount Sinai, where something is found to illustrate the subject—It was properly a *mixed dispensation*. It was so, largely considered. What I intend is simply this: In a fearful interview, the law and the gospel were conspicuously exhibited. And while said mixture implies no confusion of the two, on the one hand, it was justified by the mixed character of the congregation assembled there; and again, by its important use, as touching the *law*, not only in urging the convinced sinner to Christ, which it does at this moment: but especially, in regard to the nature of a new ritual, which was then published for their advantage, of preparing them fitly to discern Christ Jesus and salvation in a figure. And that the law and gospel on the occasion referred to, were not barely uttered, but either in a covenant form, we have convincing proof. In Paul's epistle to the Galatians, where an allusion is made, it is affirmed expressly: *For these are the two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*† And in the explication of

* Rom. vi. 14. † Gal. iv. 24, 25, 26.

his meaning, on the only ground that may be admissible, it is a plain suggestion in its bearing on these covenants, that confounding the one from Mount Sinai, with the other which is from above ; or, describing the children of the one, as though truly pertaining to the other, is entirely to erase all distinction between them ; and what is equally clear, to mistake the nature of the apostle's entire reasoning throughout that most admirable epistle.—The truth is, the covenant of works was declared on that occasion, not as its first publication, but, as a new *manifestation* ; and was subscribed by a free declaration of the people. With regard to Israel, you are aware, that they say to Moses ; “ All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.”* And to reason against the essence of a covenant transaction, where evidence of the fact is so glaring, is, in my solemn conviction, to trifle with the sense of an honest and simple narration.

The same, in substance, might be urged from a case that occurred under the personal ministry of Christ ; that of a young man, which has already been presented to your notice. As we observed, in the advice given him to *Keep the commandments*, as the ground on which to expect eternal life, our Savior advised him in a legal manner. He counselled him to that, which had precisely suited the circumstances of Adam. And while it is improved in that manner by Calvinistic preachers of the gospel, it is clear to a spiritual mind, that as one, thoroughly steeped in a law-spirit, and disposed to pharasaical admiration, our Saviour dealt with him on principles, that are no way indicative of salvation purely through his gracious interposition.

To all which I might subjoin, that when Paul as-

* Exod. xix. 8.

serts, in a view of our natural state, that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the *curse* ; we should not restrain that punitive wrath, in my opinion, either to *original* or *actual* delinquencies. There is nothing in the nature of the case that certainly requires it. But while the legal desert of a sinner, on the principles I have fully established, is concerned with either, it will simplify our views of this matter, if the curse spoken of, may be taken rather in a *cumulative* sense ; and every overt iniquity, as a continued slight of the same perpetual provision. A view of the subject, not only consistent with what is intimated of the penalty, or glorious *sanction* of the covenant, but that is consonant, if I err not, with the simplicity that pervades the instructions of the gospel.—But in view of the whole affair, so far as it is made distinctly a theme of contemplation, permit me to say, That respecting every breach of the covenant of life, commencing with its first violation in the garden ; the condition in which it leaves the race, in regard to its proper effect, is well compared to a *vessel at sea* : the crew of which, though embarked in a laudable design, having lost their pilot, and caught in a driving storm, are no way prepared to manage for their good : and while every gale in that very state, threatens an immediate wreck, it is painfully obvious, unless an arm of mercy is sent speedily to their relief, all hope shall forever depart from them, and they must sink down to a certain and irretrievable ruin.

DISCOURSE VI.

Romans v. 19—For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Your attention was directed in the preceding discourse, to the consequences of the first sin in its bearing on mankind: and with an eye to a public connexion between Adam and his offspring, its influence on the latter was considered as *imputed*, or reckoned to their account by the supreme Law-giver.

Regarding it in that light, we explained the view entertained of the subject; and having done so, endeavored to establish from the scriptures the *fact* of such an imputation;—noticing in conclusion its correspondence with a scriptural respect to the race as *lost*—lying under the wrath of a prior defection—and yet favored with a temporary reprieve, that they may escape the penalty of transgression through Jesus Christ, our everlasting surety.

If the proof then advanced be relevant to my purpose, and I trust it will claim a mature consideration, I go on in a single attempt to remove *objections*, commonly brought against this belief, by those who do not acquiesce in the principles I have urged.

And in reference to the legal desert of the first offence, as reckoned to the natural offspring of the first pair, I will remark,

First. It is objected to the sentiment avowed, that “it is opposed to certain declarations of *Scripture*; for there, we are admonished, in regard to moral accountability, that every man shall *bear his own burden*.”

Concerning the general principle contemplated in

this objection, we certainly acknowledge its obvious propriety ; and must think too, that on a large scale, it is characteristic of the divine administration throughout the universe. But in regard to this lower world, or the particular event embraced in this discussion, I am not aware that it is made to assume a proper application.

If there be any thing however, derived from the lively Oracles, which wears the appearance of this exception, I trust it will be generally admitted, that it appears in the prophecy of Ezekiel. And in respect to that prophet, as a declaration recorded by his instrumentality, is often urged as the very *gist* of the objection, confining myself to it, in a few thoughts, it may be suitable to give it at least a candid consideration.

Adverting to the declaration itself, it is this : *The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son ; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.** And in regard to its true bearing, I observe generally, though a plausible intimation on the subject, taken unqualifiedly, if the *design* of it however be sought for, it wears wholly a new garb. And the reason can be easily suggested. We find it refers entirely to God's peculiar people of old, and mainly, to his dealings with them at a period, that rolled away prior to the captivity in Babylon. We find also, that the immediate occasion of it was simply this : a complaint of the Jews during their exile, that came to the ear of the prophet ; and one observe, founded purely, on the confessed imputation of the sins of their ancestors, as confirmed in their own apprehension by a retributive dispensation of Providence. The complaint

* Chap. xviii, 20.

is: *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge* ;* or, the fathers sinned, and their descendants endure the wrath that it merited.

But more particular, in regard to the subject, I may add, *first* : that there was good foundation for the *fact*, couched in the declaration, viz., that the fathers breaking covenant with God, the children bear the mournful consequence of their folly. For not only the sad record of their historical career, but what may be noticed, the testimony of the prophet Jeremiah, is very pertinent in its bearing on this topic. Being called, as he evidently was in divine Providence, to counsel the church in that day of affliction, he affirms plainly : *Thou recompensest the iniquities of the fathers into the bosoms of their children after them.*† He declares also—and the words were penned during that very exile—*Our fathers sinned and are not, and we have borne their iniquities* :‡ Or, our fathers transgressed and we are made to bear the punishment, that it properly deserves. And I will barely inquire, whatever reply shall be given it, if any thing can be viewed as more decisive than this strain ; when it is seen, that the prophet Jeremiah, is speaking to the very point embodied in the allegation of the repining Jews ? Again : if there was solid ground for the verity of this complaint, it is equally clear from the divine record, in what light it was taken up by Jehovah. In reply to their murmurings, he assures them strongly, that they should no more have occasion for any thing of that sort. Hereafter, the general principle of his moral government should be observed in regard to them, viz., They should bear every one “his own burden :”§ and in respect to his own purpose, and sovereign dispensa-

* Chap. xviii. 2. † Jer. xxxii. 18. ‡ Lam. v. 7. § G al. vi. 5.

tions respecting them, would be guided himself manifestly by that profession.

And, brethren, what is all this to do, one way or the other with the imputation of Adam's sin? In a direct manner, nothing I judge, more than the first verse in the book of Genesis. And speaking of any bearing it *may* have, it will strongly appear at a single glance. For what is the prophet there attempting? In reply to this interrogation, as intimated already, he is treating in that place simply of *private* offences: and not only that, but the sins of individuals, who constituted a small part of the earth's population, and who were bound together primarily by no other tie than mere consanguinity. Yet even then, namely, as concerned with God's people under the former dispensation, he grants, in reporting the will of the Most High, that heretofore, he had deviated from that principle of his moral administration. And the very confession itself, justly implied in the narrative, really turns it into an argument of no trifling weight in favor of the imputation that I have aimed to establish. For it must appear to an unbiassed mind, not only that the point in debate is there allowed, but as I shall insist on it, under circumstances, by no means as justifiable, to say the least, in sight of *mere man*, as in the stipulations and parental kindness of that covenant which he claimed for a season your impartial investigation.

I could subjoin on this topic, that if the phraseology of the prophets alluded to in regard to *bearing the iniquity* of the fathers, implies not the just penalty of sin, it is hard to prove from the word of God, that the satisfaction of Christ is truly *vicarious*. The exposition of such passages has a vital connexion with that doctrine; and though lightly regarded by some, will not remain with-

out its influence on our experience. And in relation to its bearing on that subject, I can only say, if it import nothing of a proper curse, nay, in the eye of impartial justice itself, as used in the *latter* instance; it were easy to shew what has not been disproved, that there is nothing in the gospel of the grace of God, by which that feature of a perfect atonement is more decisively inculcated.

2. I go on therefore in respect to an interest in the apostacy to observe, *secondly*: it is objected to a fellowship in the first sin, that "the accursed *evil* of it, as styled, comes on us merely in the way of natural consequence; and it cannot, therefore, be an executed threatening of the covenant alluded to."

In remarking a circumstance which is assumed in the objection, viz., that the evil of the apostacy is felt *only* in the operation of natural causes, it will hardly be presumed that I should give it an unqualified support. But not agitating the point very carefully, I will state in regard to the *objection*, that there is something extremely suspicious in its very appearance. It augurs ill in a due respect for the established agency of the Supreme; and what is plain as to the nature of his universal dominion. It can hardly be accounted for charitably, but in supposing that the person making it, has overlooked a grand distinction on which it is properly based; that is—betwixt original and actual transgressions. In allusion to the latter, viz., *actual* sins, it is universally confessed, that concerning their penal effects—as they are modified by civil society, or retributive instances of Providence—that is, by our *particular* state for the time being, the distinction couched in the objection is appropriate: and if restrained to our own

agency, or immediate effects of it in given circumstances, whatever they are, it can all be explained doubtless, without a formal and detailed resort to our connexion with a representative Head.

But that all evils flowing from the apostacy by natural consequence, should be considered on that ground as no part of God's displeasure against sin, is not evident to a well balanced mind. On the contrary ; it is as unphilosophical, I think, as contrary to plain scripture, if we respect only the *constitution of nature* ; or operation of fixed principles, by which God is pleased to recompence the transgression of his creatures. In speaking of that thing, it may be easily declared, that *natural law*, is the instrument which God chiefly employs in the present world for punishing iniquity. That the immediate effects of sin, which are penal, arise only in that manner. And I may add, while a presumption exists that even in the world of despair, this law, as displayed in the effect of crime, will pervade the state of the damned forever ; you will discover meanwhile, in regard to itself, that the law is one of a most searching description. On this plan it falls out experimentally, that sin is its own avenger ; and the relation of cause and effect so very intimate, as was shewn,* that sin, under one aspect, is the act itself, and under another, the infliction of its own proper desert. And while the order of nature therefore is unchanged by the supreme Arbiter, it naturally follows, yea, the fact is suggested by evidence of the inspired record ; that without the intervention of a positive *miracle* to the contrary, God may, and does punish sin palpably in the natural consequences of human guilt.

* SEE p. 40, et seq.

If this be allowed then, what becomes of the objection respecting the evils of the apostacy, as flowing to mankind in the way of natural sequence? How can the mode of communication, as urged in the objection, affect the doctrine of imputation? If sin may, and certainly *is* punished in this manner, upon what plan is its validity sustained? Without debating it a moment, in my own view, it is quite foreign to the purpose. And not only is that perceivable, but I can suggest, while it is inscrutable in what manner the *mode* of punishing sin has any bearing whatever on the argument; it is equally vain, to argue against the greater *severity* of its execution, on one plan or the other; either then by direct infliction, or through the medium solely of secondary causes. Not to say, it is no point, that we are called to agitate at this time, I may observe, that while the elements of nature, as freely made use of, are the same confessedly wielded in special interposition, as subject to natural law, it can be shewn that the most perfect forms of misery are seen in the effect of the latter. And were the influence of either precisely the same, what, I may ask modestly, is gained by a preference of the former? To employ a simple illustration, in explanation of the thought, suppose for once, which is suggested by Scripture, that *Korah and his men*, had been swallowed up by an earthquake? that is a fair instance—or the *priests of Baal* had been struck dead by the forked lightning, and all of it accounted for, *merely*, upon natural principles? Had not the certain perdition of those sinners been equally painful and unexpected?—Sure I am, the point cannot be doubted for a moment. And always mindful that natural law, or the course of *nature*, operates with the same uniformity in one case, as the other; in the pun-

ishment of original, as well as actual transgressions, it follows plainly, that the objection based on the mode of executing the divine will, must certainly fall to the ground.

Indeed, were the objection available at all, it would be easy to prove, that it takes too large sweep; and with regard to actual sin, as punished in an hereditary manner, the sin of a parent in the maladies of a child, a very common case, that it wears an unfavorable aspect. And yet, it is difficult to show, if the desert of a parent in *one instance*, in compliance with a just threatening, is materially undergone by a child, that under a righteous constitution, the sin of Adam, as ours federally, and through the operation of natural law, may not be avenged in his natural posterity. But not enlarging on the point in connexion with this topic, I barely observe, that the notice taken of this scruple may be important, if we discover its bearing on a principle not to be yielded up: a position, which cannot be discarded, without violating not only the sense of Scripture, but in discussions of this nature, plunging the human mind into an inextricable labyrinth of error. It is this: "That the consequences of penal suffering are themselves punishment, so far, as the effect of it is taken in view by the Judge in denouncing the sentence, and comprehended within the scope of his real design." A principle as capable of defence by analogical reasoning, as accordant with unsophisticated common sense; and every thing disclosed to us, respecting the effects of an act of daring rebellion, committed by the parent of a degenerated offspring.

3. But I remark *thirdly*: it is objected to our view of imputation, that "the evils arising from the apostacy,

may be overruled under a dispensation of mercy to our greatest good; and they cannot, therefore, be a judicial manifestation of the divine displeasure against a part in that transaction."

With regard to the objection, stated in the most plausible manner, it appears to be inapposite: or rather, it confirms the ground I have taken, by admitting a disability, which may be subordinated, not always in point of *fact*, to the highest advantage of a sinning progeny.

And to shew the utter weakness of the exception here taken, I observe, first—That nothing is more fully established in the whole Book of God than the point, that in regard to their situation, mankind are by nature in a state of *condemnation*.* They are born under a law that *worketh wrath*.† In regard to both soul and body, and particularly the latter, prior to a saving interest in Christ, they are *dead in trespasses and sins*.‡ And though sinning "without law," or written admonition, it is said that they shall *perish* in that predicament:§ yea, that not only by nature, but against its glimmering light, are they sensible on their own part, of doing things, that in the eye of eternal justice are *worthy of death*.|| This, is the condition of the human family, as denoted with superior exactness, and described in the pathetic strain of inspired asseveration. Again: the administration of a new Covenant, is exactly in tone with the point of this representation. In the offers of salvation to *all* men through faith in its stipulations, you notice what is very decisive, that it promises deliverance truly from a *deserved* destruction. Whatever be the result therefore of a positive treatment of the race

* Gal. iii. 10. John iii. 18. † Rom. iv. 15. ‡ Eph. ii. 1. § Rom. vi. 12. || Rom. i. 32.

on these principles, it will amount to the same thing ; and evidently so, as connected either with the welfare of the church, a fuller display of the baseness of sin, or the final salvation of the offender himself. Viewed in any respect whatever, it is a fact beyond controversy, that the gospel accosts us as beings condemned universally to die. It finds the race prisoners at the bar of justice. And till offered mercy is accepted, nay, the full consent of the heart yielded to a new proposal, the sinner lies under the curse of an incensed God. And with respect to his prospects, you are painfully aware, that instead of profiting by the forbearance, or requiring the kindness of his sovereign, according to Scripture, his heart *is fully set in him to do evil*.* He has no sense of his condition, or a sincere desire to escape its dreadful allurements. And it is very certain, that if the child of God often suffers the severe marks of fatherly anger for undutiful regard, a sinner of the character described, must be viewed, as eminently treasuring up wrath, against the day of wrath, and preparing himself for a more aggravated doom.

Nor can it be shewn from acknowledged facts in the administration of Providence, that the statement is inconsistent with a presumption of its truth: for many things in the latter end of depraved man, are not made obviously to wear a benevolent aspect. Do you ask for proof of it? I can name a variety of considerations. Take, for example, the case of infants, yea, millions of them in that period of being, cut off from the earth as their powers begin to bud. Among children of the same common parent, espy one from its infancy which is fearfully snared by Satan, and in every part of its ca-

* Eccles. viii. 2.

reer, madly pursuing a fatal course. Observe also, in every stage of life, how many are deprived of their reason, and the noblest attributes of our frame, without resorting to any culpableness of their own. And consider too, as decisive of the point to be illustrated, how large a portion of the species are strangers to the work of salvation; and of them who hear the gracious tidings, how many in like manner, are disabled from attending on, or, are wholly deprived of the established means of restoration by a Redeemer. And in all these dispensations of the Eternal hand, it is hard to see the equity of the plan, without a due regard, and serious admission of an individual share in the desert of the first delinquency.*

Yet, if any persist in decrying the connexion, or evidence from respect to the actual dispensations of Providence, passing by other particulars, I turn merely for a moment, as well as fit elucidation to the curse falling on the earth for *man's sake*. It is given in this manner: *Cursed is the ground for thy sake.*† Its import plainly, the same as in Deuteronomy: *Cursed shalt thou*

* It is plain and evident, from *facts*, that Adam was considered and dealt with under the capacity of a public head, and that death, *natural*, *spiritual*, and *eternal*, were included in the threatening; for all his posterity are evidently dealt with as *if that had been the case*. They are born *spiritually dead*, as has been proved in the former discourse.—They are evidently liable to *natural death*, as soon as they are born. And if they die and go into eternity with their native temper, they must necessarily be miserable in being what they are, unlike to God, and incapable of the enjoyment of him, and contrary to him. And God must necessarily look upon them with everlasting abhorrence; for he cannot but abhor creatures whose tempers are contrary to him: so that here is *eternal death*; and all in consequence of Adam's first sin.—*Belamy*.

† Gen. iii. 17.

*be in the field.** And considering that prior to a sweeping deluge, it was felt to be a painful verity;† and from that day to this, in its nearer and remote consequences, is connected with a most dreadful waste of human existence and happiness; I ask an opposer of imputation to dispose of the *fact*, on a principle that will bear the test of fair examination. If he says, in opposition to our belief, that this and other *evils*, as they are thought, coming on the first pair; must be viewed, not as an exhibition of punitive justice, but rather, as the compassions of a reconciled Being; I then inquire—if it be indeed characteristic of Christ's kingdom and the admirable provision of the gospel, to hold out unspeakable blessings, dictated piteously, and dispensed by a gracious hand, as coming to mankind in this manner: not only by a settled constitution, as it were, but what is more—denounced upon them literally with the formality of a sentence!—If this be a usage of the sacred penmen, it has escaped our observation. And I shall acquiesce in the impression of Jonathan Edwards, whatever may appear, that it is a style of address which savors little of the grace of God that bringeth salvation; or, the vital spirit of that word, in which the blessings of the Messiah's reign, are kindly urged upon the acceptance of our dying race.

4. Fourthly. It is objected with an air of plausibility to the imputation of Adam's sin, that "his posterity did not *subscribe the stipulations* of the covenant I contemplate: therefore, it must be unjust, to require them individually to abide by the consequences of its violation."

* Deut. xxviii. 16. † Gen. v. 29.

In regard to a covenant made with an individual, which is binding on his posterity, the equity and moral fitness of it, in the case of our natural Head, has already been discussed. Some proof, however, corroborative of its fairness, may be drawn particularly from the nature of covenants, I think, which are presented to notice in the sacred volume, and that involve in our apprehension the same leading characteristics.

In relation, for instance, to the covenant made with Abraham, and recorded in the 17th of Genesis—it involves every principle I have insisted upon: especially the right of God to intimate, and a prerogative of parents to bind their posterity to a personal act. For the covenant that God made with the patriarch, was made not only with Abram, but with his offspring or *seed after him*.^{*} His unborn descendants were embraced in the stipulations of the charter. And as the direct consequence of it, we are informed truly that the *man child*, which was not circumcised on the eighth day, was considered to be a violator of its terms. With regard to an offence therefore, if that be the case, it should certainly have incurred in some fashion: and in respect to the *penal* consequences of it, it can hardly admit of more than one aspect, if explained merely with an eye to Scripture-phraseology. As it is written, and was designed undoubtedly for a practical use: *The uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant*.[†] It will certainly occur at first sight, that whatever is the precise nature of this *excision*, it cannot affect the principle, for which it is adduced in the present relation.

^{*} Verse 7. [†] Verse 14. See Pool's Synopsis in Loc.

But leaving out at this time, what may be termed a covenant transaction between parties, there is striking proof in the Scripture to justify the fact—of one man's being treated in law-reckoning, in given circumstances, as though he had incurred the offence of another. And perhaps a satisfactory illustration of it, is taken from the dispensation of God toward private families. I have in mind households, dealt with after the manner, occurring in the instances of Achan, Saul, Jeroboam, Baasha, Ahab and some others. Where the parent not only, was a sufferer for his own fault, but in a more exemplary manner, his natural and unoffending offspring.

If we have respect to the very cases referred to, that of Jeroboam, perhaps, is invested with peculiar interest. It is so, as a striking demonstration of displeasure against sin. For at the expiration of twenty-four years, from the time of setting up the calves in Dan and Bethel, he received fully that recompense of error which is meet. And the measure was a painful one. All his natural posterity, according to the saying of Ahijah, part of which were unborn at the utterance of it, were perpetually cut off from the face of the earth. And in regard to a case, so decisively traced in the sacred history; even made the pattern of most terrible acts of retributive vengeance; it is not only vain, but, as I verily think, an outrage on common sense, to speak of it, as dictated purely by the tender mercy of our God. Nothing can be more evident, than it was not so considered by saints in that age of the world; either indeed, in its bearing on Jeroboam, or, upon the welfare of his family. And though some have aimed lately to convince us, that all this pain and deprivation came on his posterity, solely as his punishment, not theirs, it cannot affect the main

point at issue. Not to say that he died himself, a very impressive circumstance, before the threatening was completely asserted, the principle remains unimpaired. And it appears so in an affecting manner. For allowing the *fact*, (which shall not be disputed,) that the suffering of the children was a punishment to himself, decides a point, viz., that under the moral government of God, it is no singular case, that the ill-desert of one agent is fully realized in the experience of another. And if that shall be supposed, whatever is doubted, is comparatively irrelevant: for though we make a distinction in regard to punishment, between its matter and publication, it is the former, no doubt, that makes the grand trouble in vindicating the ways of God to man. And in the instance of Jeroboam, as far as the fate of his household is considered, in whatever light it is viewed; or, however softened down by the name of misfortune, calamity, or even fatherly anger—is very immaterial. The main feature is still the same: that one person actually endures the legal consequences of another's transgression; and in circumstances less happy, it appears, than can reasonably be pretended in respect to a part in the apostacy, as flowing primarily through a proper relation to an acknowledged representative.

If the principle, therefore, on which the fact of imputation is built, is elucidated in cases analogous: if the grand point, the infliction of misery without personal ill desert, is clearly manifested: it may serve, at least, in regard to its sacred origin, to vindicate the doctrine avowed, from what is most plainly an unhallowed perversion.

5. Again. It is objected to the sentiment advanced, that "we are not required in the scriptures to *repent of*

Adam's sin: and we cannot, therefore, be thought to have an interest in the proper desert of that iniquity."

With regard to any sorrow for that sin, as involving a charge of personal trespass, the very thought, is not only foreign to my heart, but I know not a judicious Calvinist on earth, that ever adopted the invidious belief. On the contrary, it is strenuously affirmed, in respect to our fellowship in that matter, that there is no consciousness of personal aberration: on no pretence whatever, is there any transfer of guilt before our Maker. So far from that, the very notion of it, as I fully intimated, is utterly at war with the nature of the doctrine inculcated; and manifestly so, in the single circumstance, of its being founded mainly, not on a natural, but upon a federal relation to the great progenitor of our fallen race.

But though a consciousness of sinning be peculiar to the soul of our representative, we are not on that ground uninterested observers of his folly. As his own offspring, embraced in a settlement of some description, and sustaining a relation to him, we share the painful consequence of the act: and instead of pleading a singular indifference to it, there is no earthly reason imaginable, why we ought not, rather, to mourn the dreadful character of that deed. And if you inquire, what is the nature of the lamentation, that we should exhibit in regard to it, I answer then, it is a real and holy grief. It is such, to employ a scriptural incident, in explanation, as the saints at Corinth displayed about the incestuous person; a case, you are aware, strongly marked—for the consequences of whose conduct were suited to bring reproach, if not to inflict a lasting injury on them all.* And such being its character, I could urge, that it is pre-

* II. Cor. vii. 12.

cisely the same which a people manifest in a public capacity, when they bewail with fasting the sins of rulers ; and earnestly deprecate the judgments of Heaven, just ready to be scattered upon a land, that is bleeding under a fatal prostration of moral principle.

Such then, is the sorrow, and these the emotions that should arise in the heart, in view of the guilt contracted by the first man. It is simply a genuine emotion—an unaffected expression of pity and deep self-abasement—marked by a disposition to justify the ways of God, and a simple desire that it may be improved to our good. And this is the sum of it. Any thing more, as implying personal aberration, is as inconsistent with the doctrine of imputation, in other aspects, as in the point of supposed connexion with Adam. For if that repentance, which is marked by *self-accusation*, be implied in this instance ; undoubtedly, the imputation of our sins to Christ, would require that he repent of them in like manner : nay more—it must follow on the same principle, that his perfect obedience, set to our account in the point of acceptance with God, would allow us to cherish a feeling of self-delight, as though by our own goodness we had secured the inestimable blessing. For the principles of transfer are the same in either case ; and none will assert an opinion, I imagine, that is so foreign from the light of sound reason, and utterly at war, with every dictate of a pure and sanctified heart.

6. I will only add, therefore, in the last place : an objection is often urged against the doctrine of imputation, that in my view, should never fall from the lips of a dying man, viz., “ Were I in the place of my first parent, or had a similar trial, I could not have disobeyed the command of God as he did.” For on what ground,

it is retorted, is the assertion made, or deserving a moment's respect from a serious inquirer after truth ?

If the natural offspring of Adam, instead of a responsible relation to him, had been tried merely in a personal reckoning ; they had possessed, in the premises, the same advantages, or chance of standing and falling that he did : and as far as their state therefore is considered, it had been precisely the same thing. If they stood, well ; or, if they fell, there is no disparity in the case : the same impunity the one could flatter himself with, is all the other can claim on that hypothesis. And while it cannot be made out, that God dealt unfairly with our first parents in regard to the requirement he laid upon them ; or, any grace he withheld or bestowed in the matter ; the objection itself, so far from meriting respect, is a base insinuation, that the administration of the Almighty in a particular instance was partial and oppressive.

Besides : there is not only a slur cast on the historical fact respecting the trial in the garden, but the exception wears an uncomfortable aspect, in regard to any trial whatever, touching plain truth, that our race are favored with, in the circumstances of their stay in this world. With respect to that point, I can only insist upon it—if it be the economy of the Most High, that a probation be enjoyed in some manner—it is capable of proof, that a chance of securing life in the person of Adam, was infinitely greater, than in any manner we begin to exercise a moral agency upon earth. As some have insisted on the topic, or the advantage of an interest in representative faithfulness—and the fact is indisputable : The first man was created in the full perfection of our nature. He possessed all spiritual gifts

and opportunities. With clear views of truth, and of good and ill-desert, motives of superior weight, as concerned with his own part in the event, urged him to exact compliance with the divine will. And what can never escape your recollection, in a view of his *outward state*—as a depraved stock were not then upon the stage, he was not impeded, by the prevailing and accumulated influence of their corrupt conversation.

On the contrary, how unspeakably remote from this description is the case of his offspring, when they begin to act their own parts as capable agents. Ushered into the world with much natural infirmity, and constant lability to death itself: deriving from a common stock, as we shall soon prove, a morally impure and corrupt nature: beset on every side by the fatal influences of the flesh, the world, and of the devil:—and in the judgment of all serious christians, laboring under a disability of some kind that will secure the certainty of sinning, and that may be relied upon in the outset—it verily appears, that no parallel can exist in the cases in question. And that any one, who could prefer a trial in a predicament so inauspicious to a representative standing in our forefather, must labor under a physical weakness of weighing evidence, or appreciating sober fact: for none I shall presume, ever *imagined*, that if the result of that trial had turned out actually the reverse of what it did, that any child of a corrupt extraction, had been found to complain of the spirit of that constitution.

Such are the objections commonly urged against an imputation of the first sin; and reiterated with renewed ardor against a sentiment, which I think, is already established by evidence of an unanswerable descrip-

tion.* And with the entire conviction in the attention I have paid them, I close what is briefly laid before you, with merely adding: That the *dialect* employed in my remark, as involving a federal sameness, crime and punishment, is not only correct in principle, but on no account whatever should be wholly discarded.

An argument to this effect is evidently involved in the discussion I have passed through. It arises from the fact, as relating to that point, that it not only agrees with the style of corporate bodies, but you will bear in

* Perhaps this is the consideration which most commonly first leads poor sinners to see that they do actually lie under the guilt of Adam's first sin; and that their ruin thence took its rise, viz., their finding, by experience, when the Spirit of God brings home the law, and awakens conscience, that they are, *by nature dead in trespasses and sins*; for now no conclusion can be more natural than that they are, *by nature; children of wrath*. And this will naturally lead them to inquire, whence this has come to pass? and they will presently find the Scripture express and plain in it, that *by one man's disobedience many were made sinners*; and *by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*: and their own experience will give them the most natural comment upon the words, while they feel themselves to be, by nature, dead in sin, and exposed to eternal ruin.

But until men are awakened, at least to some sense of their natural corruption, they are commonly very blind and deaf to all the Scripture says about this matter. It is hard to make men believe contrary to their own experience; to make them believe that they *fell* in Adam, when they do not feel that they are, by nature, *fallen* creatures. Let the Scripture speak ever so plain, yet they cannot believe that it means as it says. It must mean, they think, something else. The best method, therefore, to convince sinners of the doctrine of original (imputed) sin, and to silence all their cavils, is to open the true meaning of the *moral law*, and shew them their native depravity. This is the method which God takes in the Bible. He says but little about Adam's first sin, but says much to shew us what we really are, as knowing that, if we are but once convinced of our native corruption, a few words are sufficient to shew us whence our ruin originally took its rise.—*Bellamy*.

memory, is certainly warranted by the freedom of the holy penmen. And employed on various occasions, as in Scripture, where the leading views are unquestionably the same, so far from discarding, I think that we should conscientiously *retain* it; and in respect to our brethren, who dissent from us, may reply, that the allegation is vain, viz., "No matter what becomes of mere expression, if the thing itself is fairly acknowledged." Not to say, that it is built on the unphilosophical base that in ordinary use, words and ideas exert wholly an independent influence, the assertion under any aspect, is unsustained by experience, and is disowned by the result of exact observation. For if any thing whatever is learned by the effect of preaching, it must appear, that this language is certainly adapted to answer an invaluable purpose. To render prominent in the perception of people the absolute connexion between sin and misery, a consciousness of sinning and a share in the maladies that certainly accrue from it: is wisely fitted to convey to the understanding simple and elevated views of the divine administration; and what relates in the inspired volume, and in their completest harmony to the justice and mercy of the divine dispensations:—and if we are not mistaken, it serves infinitely better than any other, to discipline the mind to habits of serious examination; to a quicker conception of inspired truth; and to a more lively and patient discrimination of the ways and counsels of the infinite One.

Nor can we think it less favorable, on the whole, to an increase of vital piety. Not disparaging it in that light, if we judge properly, its influence is peculiarly happy in that respect. And the grand secret of it, may be easily perceived. For the strain of doctrine which is

cherished by this address, does certainly merit some regard in one aspect: and that, I trust, can hardly have escaped your attention. It is this: it encourages a respect, for what are styled the *severer* graces. Not I would intimate, at the expense of any of softer temperament. But while it is favorable to all the elements of true holiness, I greatly wonder, if its superior influence is not *felt*, in producing in the heart, an hatred of all sin; in rendering God's people averse to trampling upon the authority of Christ; and very clearly, in exciting a reverence for the humane virtues—those crossing to our carnal inclination—as the forgiveness of faults, self-denied charity, the reparation of injuries and like things: traits of character, as we are often admonished, feebly displayed in this infatuated world: which are not perpetuated, where a kind feeling is apparent, but through a holy fear of God in the solemn relations of Legislator and Judge. And without an awe impressed on the spirit, which arises naturally, and is fostered by their daily presence, religion can never exhibit on earth her celestial purity; and we may easily discover, though restricted to our immediate acquaintance, that there is very little stability in the principles and aspect of the christian character.

OF DEPRAVITY.

DISCOURSE VII.

John iii. vi.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

In tracing the bearing of the apostacy on the state of our guilty race, with a due respect to the constitution under which Adam was placed, we considered the first sin, as imputed to us ; or, the fearful interest that we have, though certain relation to the latter, in the penal effects flowing from its commission.

We shall next regard the influence of it, considered as *inherent* ; not merely as a judicial dispensation, which it manifestly is, but in the present attempt, as embracing a charge of personal demerit ;—especially, a nature morally diseased, derived to each individual of the race in the way of ordinary generation.

In a more definite respect to what is offered on this branch of the subject, a point of immeasurable importance in our day, I will state *first*, the view entertained of the position avowed : and then, confirm the doctrine I shall explain, by evidence derived principally from the sacred scriptures.

First. I design to state clearly, the view entertained of the sentiment adopted : or, what is declared of a nature morally corrupt, derived through the medium of ordinary descent.

In pursuing this aim, I refer barely, to the state of our first parent at the creation. And with regard to that topic, morally examined, it is judged consonant with

Scripture, no less than sound reason, that he was formed in a state of perfect rectitude. That he was created not only morally pure, but the purity of his nature corresponded with an unerring standard—the absolute requirement of the decalogue: the spirit of a code, which not only in the *tenth* precept, but in its vital and extensive application, demands in the service of God, the equal and perfect exercise of all our powers. It is conceived, in fine, that in harmony with the spirit of that standard, our progenitor at his formation, was *subjectively*, in every thought and desire, as well as sense and habitual deportment, vitally confirmed to the moral pleasure of the Creator.*

This freely admitted, we believe in like manner, and in view of what has been suggested, that it is vastly important to conceive clearly of the nature of *sin*: and as connected with a communion in the apostacy, that much confusion may arise from lightly regarding this intimation.

If the inquiry is urged then—What is sin? A reply is furnished by the apostle John: *Sin is the transgression of the law.*† The word rendered “transgression,” is a compound term, taken literally, signifying *without law*; or, that has the property of illegality. From the definition of the sacred penmen, you perceive in relation to its *nature*, that sin is formally a disagreement with the divine law: a general fact, as you will perceive, that in a due respect to this matter, embraces sins of omission as well as sins of commission: a statement too, from which it naturally arises, that there is properly, but one standard of moral developement; one measure, I will intimate, of *sin* and *holiness*, considered as things

* See an admirable view of man's primitive state in BERRY-STREET SERMONS.—Vol. I. p. 153, et seq. † John iii. 4.

that are fairly opposed. And respecting those attributes, viz., sin and holiness, though confessedly at variance in a specific regard, the opposition between them, is not that of things generically disagreeing; not that for instance of body and mind, fire and water and the like; or, things which have a real subsistence, and are widely distinct in their comprehensive relations.

This distinction then, being warranted by the passage, it follows that sin has no existence, but in a relative respect to law; and cannot be viewed in the sight of the Lawgiver himself, save *merely*, as conformity, or non conformity with a rule of conduct. But held forth in that light, the nature of it, it is very clear, must be considered primarily, as the lack of moral rectitude. And concerning its opposition to *holiness*, the character of it, is fitly shadowed forth in the eye of the law, rather, by the repugnance of light to darkness—of health to sickness—of a soil under a genial influence bearing something good, and under the reverse nothing of that description. An idea, that is very easy of apprehension. For in the spirit of the apostle's assertion, you perceive in regard to the metaphors presented, or, what is justly opposed in them, that if the good be taken away, the evil spoken of, in every case immediately appears. A representation, meanwhile, not designed in any manner, to cloak the native deformity of sin; but as concerned with the loss of the divine image in Adam, and the bearing of it upon his natural seed, will assume in our opinion a real and acknowledged importance.

And adverting to the divine image possessed by our forefather, meaning thereby, not so much his moral capacity, as his *spiritual perfection*—all admit, that he was deprived of it in the consequence of rebellion. By one

act of disobedience he lost a perfection, which is properly described by the phrase *original righteousness*. That attribute of a moral agent, which constitutes the image of God in the heart, or what is implied in it—a faint sketch of his intense and immaculate purity. And whatever there is figurative in the phraseology of it, by which a holy nature is often styled an *image*; it is readily acknowledged, that in the breast of a dependent creature, and in the sensible experience of it, it implies doubtless a variety of things. It denotes not only a correct spiritual apprehension of truth—but this again, promotive of holy affection in the heart—and the whole accompanied by a correspondent conduct, and visible manifestation of their influence on the whole character. And if this was the image, which was certainly lost by transgression, particularly, in the way of a judicial bereavement, you can easily see in what manner, the nature of Adam, became morally corrupt before God. In virtue of a legal infliction, his soul was made like the earth which is cursed. He was deprived of communion with the Most High, and any preservative care of his happiness. Without the pity of an almighty Father, nothing was required, but the leaving him to himself, and his nature must become vile and unprincipled before him. Without an infusion of *positive* wickedness, his heart must be subject to a most deteriorating influence. As a mutable being simply, and bereft of inward illumination, the inferior appetites of his frame would seize the reins; and blindfold, would urge him on from one act of iniquity to another, until the day of almighty vengeance should dawn upon his polluted, and justly condemned soul. A view of his situation, you will notice by the way, that leaves no room for making God the *author of sin*: or

holden in equity for the consequences of it, to use a faint simile, more than a sheriff is, for the offence of a prisoner, who, through bare irritation, on being cut off from some immunities, not by just countenance of the magistrate, rises up against the arm, that deprives him of a desirable possession.

Now if it be inquired, what connexion there is between this statement and the subject of innate depravity, you will perceive very soon. In regard to the posterity of Adam, it is supposed that they are born into the world, in the state that he was himself, consequent on rebelling.* They possess the faculties, that is, of moral agency, or capacity to love and serve God, forming a bona-fide basis of moral duty, but not a habit of original righteousness. And the ground on which they are deprived of the blessing, is the established fact, as was said on the subject of imputation, that they sinned truly in the person of a representative; and in virtue of that relation, are ushered into the world, under the curse of a covenant transaction. Yet, while this is carefully insisted on, in respect to this *defect*, or loss of the superior qualities that constitute a likeness of our Judge; we do not remark it, in the life of the new formed infant, as involving a personal offence. This we have utterly denied. But it is viewed simply, as God's holy displeasure against iniquity, and embraced unquestionably, in the penal threatening denounced against our first parents.

But as we observed in connexion with the person of Adam, so I may, in respect to his natural seed, that the loss of God's image is instantly, yea, inevitably followed by a corruption of moral character. Something will

* Gen. v. 3. ——— and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.

bear sway over the rational mind. The legal desertion of any soul, must give way to the certain influence of vile affection. And the time when this deterioration begins, is undoubtedly the period of union between the soul and body; for then, an inceptive tendency to moral evil, theoretically at least, pervades our situation: a moral infirmity, arising not primarily, still less I think *wholly*, as some will have it, from the relation of *flesh* to *spirit*; but more clearly, through an early deprivation of that influence, by which the soul is safe, and its infant energies are cherished: an effect, or process in fact, could we thoroughly scan it, like what is displayed in regard to the *body*; or a deprivation of the parts, flowing purely from penal wrath, and manifested in an early, an invariable tendency to actual disorder. A view of the subject, I must think, that should be entirely satisfactory. For in regard to our spiritual part, it is generally confessed, that as soon as we are capable of overt transgression, we display an evil inclination; and one, in our opinion, which cannot be accounted for, in the energy of its influence, but in a single respect to the doctrine of inherent and inborn depravity.*

* I say, an *inceptive* disposition to moral evil, exists in human nature, from the moment of union between the soul and body. There is nothing whatever in the position, which is at war, with the purity of divine agency. For in creating the soul of man, and forming the union contemplated, God acts in a twofold relation; not merely as the Author of being, or in a creative capacity; but as the Executor of an existing compact. In performing the act, therefore, he creates the soul in the body and not out of it: in the moment of doing it, it is united to its partner, and forms immediately a child of our common ancestor: and therefore, from the very dawn of existence, it sustains a relation to a representative, in virtue of which, it is dealt with by just imputation as a sinner.

On this plan, no difficulty arises from the fact, that God cannot create the soul *inherently vile*. I grant it. Yet two things are here very

And if the sentiment be established in your hearing, that men are naturally depraved in the sight of God, it is very certain, that whatever *name* be given to an evil principle, or habit, it cannot affect its influence upon our moral state. It is not unfrequently the case, and particularly at this day, that men of clear understanding, adopt an incongruous address about it, and yet mean undoubtedly the same thing. And naming the principle, from which the evil acts of a child proceed, I will observe, that we may designate it variously ; saying, as thought suitable, that from its appearance in the world, it is the sin of our nature, yea, that we are *born in sin*—and leave it just there : or we may add more, if it be really advantageous, and say, that in our infantile state, sin exists in affection, will, bias, propensity, peccability and the like. It will come to the same thing, if I mistake not, even in the perception of those who most freely admit them. For both as a punishment, and at the same time, the consequence of the first offence, it is real. It lays us under a sad disadvantage, in regard to moral acceptableness. And from the earliest discovery of its deep rooted influence, we shall see in the most unex-
 apparent. First: though not vile, as coming directly from the hand of God, yet any purity it has, or is thought to have, must be merely *negative* : arising, that is, not from actual compliance with the requirements of law, which cannot be, by reason of the inceptive inclination referred to. It possesses not therefore the attribute of original righteousness. Again: there is no impropriety whatever, in speaking of the soul itself, as *naturally depraved*. Though in the order of nature, philosophically speaking, its creation must precede a moral defilement, yet, in the order of time, and therefore of fit usage, it is absolutely nothing. And as one has well remarked, whatever difficulty we have in allowing that the soul is strictly *depraved by nature*, that our corruption at least is *native*, or coeval with our entrance in the world, may not occasion a firm believer in the doctrine any reasonable ground of suspicion.

ceptionable manner, before I have done with this topic, that men are *natively* incited, and without a single exception, invariably prone, to transgress the revealed pleasure of a moral Governor.*

* On the subject, from the *Harmony of Confessions*, to which I have previously referred, I will give the following.

THE CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG.

"We mean by original sin, that which the holy fathers, and all of sound judgment and learning in the church do so call, namely that guilt, whereby all that come into the world, are through Adam's fall, subject to God's wrath and eternal death, and that very corruption of man's nature derived from Adam. And this corruption of man's nature comprehendeth, both the defect of original justice, integrity, or obedience, and also concupiscence."

THE LATTER CONFESSION OF HELVETIA.

"We therefore acknowledge that original sin is in all men; we acknowledge that all other sins, which spring hereout, are both called, and are indeed sins, by what name soever they may be termed, whether mortal or venial," &c.

THE FRENCH CONFESSION.

"We believe that all the offspring of Adam is infected with this contagion, which we call original sin, that is, a stain spreading itself by propagation, and not by imitation only, as the Pelagians thought, all whose errors we do detest. Neither do we think it necessary to search how this sin may be derived from one unto another."

ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk:) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered, of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is, of his own nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always, contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

THE CONFESSION OF BELGIA.

"Now original sin, is a corruption of a whole nature, and an hereditary evil, wherewith even the very infants in their mothers womb

With this declaration of what is intended by the doctrine of inbred depravity, we shall establish the view entertained of it, by an appeal to the sense of the holy Oracles. And in a principal respect, to what is derivable from that source, in the present attempt, we shall prove in the most direct manner, that our course on earth, is begun with a nature morally tainted, and, by certain implication, materially the worse for the sin of our natural progenitor.

In the prosecution of this purpose, or what is learned on the subject of remark from the volume of inspiration, I shall name in the first place, the proper sense of the

are polluted: the which also, as a most noisome root, doth branch out most abundantly all kind of sin in man; and is so filthy and abominable in the sight of God, that it alone is sufficient to the condemnation of all mankind."

THE CONFESSION OF BOHEMIA, OR THE WALDENSES.

"A second kind is original sin, naturally engendered in us and hereditary, wherein we are all conceived and born into this world. "Behold," saith David, Ps. 51st. "I was born in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me." And Paul, Ephes. 2d. "We are by nature the children of wrath." Let the force of this hereditary destruction be acknowledged, and judged of by the guilt and fault, by our proneness and declination, by our evil nature, and by the punishment which is laid upon it."

ARTICLES OF DORT.

"And such as man was after the fall, such children also he begat: namely, being corrupt, corrupt ones; corruption having been derived from Adam to all his posterity, (Christ only excepted,) not by imitation, as the Pelagians formerly would have it, but by the propagation of a vicious nature, through the just judgment of God."

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

"By this sin, they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed,

text. In an earnest conversation with Nicodemus, you are aware, that it fell from the lips of Jesus. He says: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* The entire declaration is familiar to you: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

In the exposition of what is immediately selected for our *text*, I remark in the first place: that by the birth spoken of in the passage, as referable in any sense, to *soul* and *body* both, cannot be intended the bare production of human nature; or, state of man merely at his birth, as consisting doubtless of a sensitive and spiritual nature. This position, which is frequently taken up, is

disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."

From able writers on the subject, the following is worthy of a notice. "That little children have a negative virtue or innocence, in relation to the *positive* acts and hurtful effects of vice, is no argument that they have a *corrupt nature* within them: For let their nature be ever so corrupt, yet surely it is no wonder that they be not guilty of *positive* wicked action, before they are capable of any *moral* action at all. A young viper has a malignant *nature*, though incapable of doing a malignant action, and at present appearing a harmless creature."—*Edwards on Original Sin*, p. 375.—*More largely* pp. 129, 133, 137.

"From all which, it is a plain matter of *fact*, that we are born into the world entirely destitute of the *moral image* of God: so certain as that the moral image of God radically consists in such a temper, and makes it natural to have "such like views and dispositions; so certain we are in fact born without it."—*Bellamy. Works*, vol. 1, p. 200.

"And that I may avoid handling the subject systematically, and tediously, I join together original and actual sin. Every one who is able to understand what I say, is concerned in both: and indeed they are inseparable the one from the other. The deplorable wickedness in which the world in general is overwhelmed, hath flowed in a continued stream from the first sin of Adam; and the sinfulness of every person's *practice*, has the corruption of his nature as its fruitful source."—*Witherspoon. Works*, vol. 1 p. 408.

"If mankind are born with neutral characters, not inclined either to good or evil, the difficulty will not be seriously lessened. In this case,

utterly foreign from any purpose, which our Savior could have had at that interview. And what is equally plain, the construction is fairly disproved, by a fixed impression of Nicodemus himself, viz., that the phrase "born of the spirit," or what relates immediately to the *soul*, occurring in the same breath with the text, implied in our Savior's mind a new, or *second* birth: one, that is, in the condition of a sinful creature, as you are impressed, by a single glance at the chapter, that in a very serious respect, was not only distinct from, but that might be very certainly contrasted with the other.

Again. We cannot speak of the birth in question, as relating simply to the flesh; or which is the same, denoting barely a quality, and then represent it as a thing *born*. To speak of it merely as an accident, and not as a subject of the birth referred to, is not only inconsistent, as will appear, with the authorised use of the

men ought now to be as generally virtuous as sinful; because this character furnishes exactly the same probability of the prevalence of virtue, as of sin. But no such equality has at any period of time existed."

"Uniform sin, proves uniform tendency to sin: for nothing more is meant by tendency, in any case, but an aptitude in the nature of a thing, to produce effects of a given kind. With this meaning only in view, we say, that it is the nature, or tendency, of an apple-tree to produce apples; and of a fig-tree to produce figs. In the same manner we must, I think, say, if we would say the truth, that it is the tendency or nature of the human heart to sin."—*Dwight. System of Theol. Ser. 32.*

"The best of men whose lives are recorded in holy scripture, have always confessed and lamented the depravity of their nature; and I never knew a character truly penitent, but he was convinced of it. It is a strong presumption against the contrary doctrine, that the light-minded and dissipated part of mankind are generally its advocates; while the humble, the serious, and the godly, as generally acknowledge with the Apostle, that fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, they were *by nature*, children of wrath even as others."—*Fuller. Works, vol. 4. p. 44.*

term ; but it is obvious on a moment's reflection, that it clearly conveys a palpable absurdity. And it must appear therefore, in any view which is taken of the passage, that by the flesh spoken of, whatever be the consequence in this instance, is intended the whole of man's nature ; or that derived to us unquestionably, in the established medium of propagating the race.

This being settled, the only point decisive in the exposition is merely the following : Does the term flesh, as used by Christ, import a nature on our part, *morally impure* ? Does it embrace, as elsewhere intimated, and in a moral acceptance, all filthiness of the *flesh* and *spirit* ? We think it does ; and shall aim to establish that belief, by some conclusive evidence in respect to it.

First. As there is nothing in the chapter, where the text is found, that certainly debars the supposition, we deem its common acceptance in the gospel, as conveying that sense, *presumptive* proof in favor of its bearing in the present instance.

As a specimen of its ordinary use in the New Testament, I shall name simply the following. It is said : *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God : and the reason is hinted in the connexion ;—because that in me—a particular instance for a general fact—that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.** It is the same thing, or a morally impure nature, of which the apostle speaks, saying, *The carnal (sukikos,) or fleshly mind, is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.†* It is the same also, on which he expatiates, declaring that the *works of the flesh are the following, viz., adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, sedi-*

* Rom. viii. 8, and vii. 18. † Rom. viii. 7.

tions, heresies and the like;—which are immediately opposed, to the fruits of the Spirit's redeeming work on the human heart.* It is the flesh in a word, against which we must *wrestle* manfully, as enlisted in a painful warfare; and in the opposition we carry on to its hurtful influence, should not give over, until it be *crucified with the affections and lusts*.†

It is the very same, indeed, which is expressly termed sinful in that impressive manner—"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of *sinful flesh*, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."‡ And though the word is taken in a comprehensive bearing, it is naturally explained if we keep in view, that the soul, as the grand seat of moral disorder, is derived *mediately* from the flesh: that a body of flesh exerts an influence on it, which is debasing, and that is too readily reciprocated: and likewise, that the body itself, is not only the certain medium of extending that influence to others, but is, in its own vileness, an outward and expressive semblance of the very depravity that I am faintly describing.

Again. Presumptive proof derived from this source, is materially strengthened by an antithesis, which is truly suggested by the text. The whole assertion, reveals it plainly: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*. For if we have judged properly, on a narrow inspection of it, an opposition of a moral kind, is evidently couched in the declaration of Christ. And to a mind, settled on the

* Gal. v. 19, 20, 21, 22. † Eph. vi. 12. Gal. v. 24. ‡ Rom. viii. 3, 4.

nature of spiritual renovation, as requiring a higher power, it cannot be difficult to name it precisely. The import of it is clearly of this character: "That as we derive by ordinary descent a morally weak and defiled nature, reminding us of our original, so it takes place, by the agency of the Spirit, under a new constitution, we inherit that called *spirit*, or spiritual: that is to say, the soul considered as renewed, or made a partaker of spiritual aliment; as you perceive, deriving its name very properly from the almighty Spirit, in that respect, in which it is formed anew by its influence. A view of the passage, as Doddridge remarks, not only required to discover the beauty of the antithesis, but in a near respect to the sense—on distinction between flesh and spirit, and the generation of either—that is necessary it is evident, to vindicate the truth, or even discover the propriety of the declaration itself.

And if this be the honest impression, produced by the scope of the assertion, it is a fact, and one of paramount importance, I shall think, that this is a common usage with the sacred penmen; for if that point be allowed in regard to it, the meaning of the passage should be considered as settled.

In relation then, to the opposition between the flesh and the spirit, as here developed, you discover it clearly in instances of this nature: for example—it is said, that the *flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh*, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Again: Though we *walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh*; or, are guided by principles that are altogether spiritual † Likewise, in respect to the excommunicated person,

* Gal. v. 17. † II Cor. x. 3.

who is cast out of the church by the authority of Jesus Christ—it is said expressly, that such an one is *delivered up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*.^{*} And in what sense is that perdition to be taken? Does it mean merely, and without a qualifying clause, the destruction of the *body*? or rather, of the sinful and fleshly control, which sin, with the countenance of it, exercises over all the faculties of our being? With regard to that query, it is fully replied to, in what immediately ensues;—that *his spirit—his spirit or himself, may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*.

And though I seem to dwell on this topic, conformed with this whole strain, I cannot but intimate, that the use of the word *natural* by Paul, designates the same, which is implied by our Savior in the term *flesh*. An instance of it, appears in the first epistle to the Corinthians. He says: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”[†] That is, a man by nature, is destitute of religion; he is blind, and is utterly unqualified for any spiritual work. But observe, the following chapter opens in this manner. “And I brethren could not speak unto you, as unto *spiritual*, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto babes in Christ:” evidently implying, that carnal and natural with the apostle, as relating to character, are convertible distinctions. And to establish the point completely, that either, is opposed to the spirituality of the gospel; it is added in a verse or two, following in the chapter: “For whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not *carnal, and walk as men?*”[‡] or if you please, according to the princi-

^{*} I. Cor. v. 5. [†] Chap. ii. 14. [‡] Chap. iii. 3.

ples that influence our conduct in a natural and unrenewed state?—This, it will appear, is in keeping with what I have insisted on. And as corroborative proof, in favor of a point, already secured, we are inclined to think, that the sense of this important passage, is established on a basis that ought not to be discarded.

Yet, if it were denied by any one, that this is a just exposition of our Savior's meaning, I would modestly hope, that the *moral aim* of Christ, in his address to Nicodemus, might not leave in their souls the vestige of a doubt. In relation to that point, as intimated already, it was no part of his plan to inculcate views of general interest, or even to explain to that man the philosophy of grace. It was simply to lead an inquirer after truth, one concerned for the welfare of his soul, and as appears in the sequel, to very good purpose, to put his trust in the Savior of sinners. And with an eye to that result, it shall not be denied, that our Savior might labor to eradicate from his heart, an undue reliance on the state and privileges peculiar to Judaism. But to explain his discourse *merely*, as some have done, on that principle, is unauthorised. It is manifestly so, if there were no other circumstance than this—that it does not come up to, or account in any manner for the use of the phrase, exactly rendered, *born again*; will not respond to any view that we may take of it, or the solemn strain, with which our divine Master urged it on the attention of that ruler. And to refer the whole thing, as others are inclined, to a reformation of conduct merely *external*, in my opinion, is still less plausible. If that were the professed design of Christ, we must all admit, that he chose a singular strain, to convey the instruction required: and no wonder that Nicodemus, though a teacher himself by pro-

fession, was really lost in an immoveable fog!—But dismissing all such conjectures, if on the contrary, he meant to teach plainly, as the language does in the New Testament, that the case of the man was alarming, and that his guilty soul must be renewed by grace, all is plain to our apprehension. On that supposition, making the phrase “born again,” synonymous with godly repentance, or importing a radical change in the moral taste, our Savior was insisting on a point of acknowledged importance. He urged a sentiment, and the only one, I suppose, which naturally agrees with a fair exposition of the text. And though foreign from the imagination of a Jew, and with a public teacher of religion, could only be conversed upon by night, it was unquestionably, the very doctrine that Peter preached at the Pentecost; and a most distinguishing part of that gospel, which in its transmission throughout the world, was accused of turning it upside down; and what is equally plain, in regard to the most cultivated understandings, was seen by sad experience, to be to the callous Jew a stumbling block, and to the aspiring Greek foolishness.

We infer, therefore, from the phraseology of the text, as confirmed by the aim of our gracious Master, that the assertion he made, viz., “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” inculcates the belief—that mankind derive by ordinary generation, a nature, that is morally debased and unholy in the sight of the infinite God.

But the same point, may be illustrated in a most decisive manner, by some reference to other passages of Scripture.

I will call your attention, then, in pursuing my object, to a declaration in the eighth chapter of Genesis. It is

this: *And the Lord said in his heart I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake; for, the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.** A fact is here asserted in regard to our race, soon after the deluge, which has an important bearing, on our sense of native depravity. But to take the complete force of it, I shall refer to another declaration of the sixth chapter of Genesis, and which has respect to a generation of mankind, that were actually *destroyed* by that deluge. The latter instance is this: *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.†*

In the declaration of the 6th chapter, the entire unholiness of our race is plainly insisted on. No form of words could teach the fact, if it be not there, that they were all exceedingly depraved before God. Their hearts, if we shall accredit the representation, were a perfect sink of iniquity. And without resorting to an hyperbole, which is very unjustifiable without palpable cause, but merely observing an affinity between the soul, and what emanates from it; it is declared expressly, that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, yea, every figment of thought and desire, and a complete tissue besides, if I may so speak, were evil and unceasingly so in the sight of their Maker. A circumstance by the way of peculiar, nay, of unbounded interest in regard to those who were capable of *actual* sinning, in bringing upon them, in God's righteous displeasure a most appalling dispensation.

But while this doctrine is susceptible of proof from the other testimony referred to, the passage in the eighth chapter, conveys an additional intimation, viz., that the

* Verse 21. † Verse 5.

depravity spoken of was a native property. It did not exist merely in *acquired habit*, as some understand it, but in respect to that, its sickening influence, was coeval with their very existence upon earth. With that view, it is naturally introduced, as a reason, why God would certainly vary his proceeding hereafter: and though wickedness should prevail, as before, that he would not visit it, in the same desolating manner. And viewing the corruption of our nature as inbred and inveterate, surely, that sense of the passage is relevant; and if allowed, must have an important bearing on the theme of our meditation. The words are plain: And the Lord said in his heart I will not curse the ground any more for *man's sake*; or, with a chief respect to presumptuous folly. And why not? it is replied then—*for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*

And in regard to the passage, as conveying the sense, I have supposed, be it suggested, that the term man is not only generic, as in the other case, but I may add, in relation to *naar*—in our version translated “youth”—that it has a certain allusion to the very commencement of human life; and embraces clearly, not only the days of childhood, but looks back the whole duration, elapsing from the moment of our personal entrance in the world. It is used observably in the Old Testament, not only of a youth, but likewise of a mere *babe*, or suckling. And as spoken of an infant in that period of existence, you may call to mind, it is applied to Moses, but a few days old;* also, to Sampson, Samuel, Isaiah, and any others, during that period of their stay upon the earth.† And undoubtedly, if any thing in Hebrew

* Ex. ii. 6. † Judges xiii. 5. I Sam. i. 22. Isaiah vii. 16. II Kings v. 14.

usage, or any other form of speech imaginable, in the way of a *date*, can teach the sentiment of innate depravity, the evidence derived from this passage, must appear on the whole to be preeminently satisfactory.

This being disposed of, a testimony equally pertinent, in its bearing on my design, is found in the 14th chapter of Job. It is this: *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.**

The first member of the passage I have named, implies something desirable in itself, but which cannot be performed however, or at least with extreme difficulty. The latter part of it teaches, that by no feasible method whatever, can the thing itself be certainly attained.

Now if the question arise, what is that point desirable in itself, it is said, to bring a "clean thing out of an unclean." And if it be asked without delay, what sense we shall ascribe to the term "clean,"† I answer plainly—*moral purity*. And in respect to the sense of it, as it has a decisive influence, I shall endeavor to evince it, by a number of important suggestions.

First. It is the immediate object of Job in the place, and what precedes it in that chapter to, deprecate the divine displeasure against sin. And respecting himself, as the subject of such prayer, without palliating his own errors, to furnish an argument at the mercy seat, suitable in itself, why God should regard his case with a lenient hand. His address relates therefore to good and ill desert: without any misapprehension, to something in accountable agents, that involves moral worth or unamiableness, in the sight of the Creator. Again: that by the word "clean," is intended what is urged, I will suggest in the way of explanation, that the ideas of *pure*

* Verse 4. † Heb. טָהוֹר.

and *just*, of cleanliness and righteousness, are often interchanged by Job ; and from the manner in which they occur, it can easily be shewn, that they are certainly used, as synonymous. In proof of the intimation, I will adduce an instance or two, and you may discover in a moment, their bearing on the topic before us. It is said then : " What is man that he should be *clean*? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be *righteous*?"* Again: " I am *clean* without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there *iniquity* in me."† Furthermore: " How then can man be *justified* with God? or how can he be *clean*, that is born of a woman."‡ This is its use by that eminent patriarch. And so far as it may go, I could add by the way—that it is also corroborated, by a very familiar acceptation of it in the tender effusions of David.§

Again. If moral purity be intended by this word, what, it may be asked, is the proper aim of the verb *to bring*?||—As concerned with its bearing on native depravity, if it be replied, (taken in the utmost latitude of it,) that it means simply, Who can bring, or present rather, a fellow creature before God that is sinlessly perfect, I shall certainly demur; for I cannot think, that it agrees with the aim of the patriarch. As respects that allusion, it is hardly a probable *fact*, that sense of it being called up, that he had earnestly started any thing of the kind. The man who disowned perfection himself, with instinctive fear of the attempt; and who knew, as much as any other, of the deceitfulness of every heart; can

* Chap. xv. 14. † Chap. xxxiii. 9. ‡ Chap. xxv. 4 § Psalms xii. 6. xix. 19. li. 7, 10. Compare too Prov. xv. 26. xx. 9. xxx. 12. § Heb. *yas* signifying primarily, *to give*, lay, place, allow, yield or give forth, &c.

hardly be thought, more than David had done—especially, when his thoughts were fixed on himself and upon his own prospects, to have awakened the query at all : and what is more, to have debated it feelingly—by interrogation and strong *negation* too—though it might no doubt, in regard to a fit plea, have had some remote relation to his particular design.

And if that be allowed, which I think, can hardly be disproved, we shall give the clause a very different turn. And according to a received impression, no less than correct usage, it refers to a nature morally *vicious* ; and with a qualified respect, to its attainment in the way of ordinary generation. And referring to a nature, not only, as morally diseased, but as *early* a subject of depravation, the words of Job are very appropriate. Nothing could make it plainer, I imagine, to the weakest apprehension. Under an acute sense of his own villainess, and ineffectual endeavors after greater holiness, he looks painfully within ; and he finds in his heart a deeply-seated, and what certainly appeared to him, an *innate* propensity to sinful practice. It was something which caused him exquisite pain, for it was a point of distinct consideration. And with respect to himself, viewing it as a great calamity, no less than a sin, in regard to its derivation however, unattended by actual blameworthiness, he would fain hope, that God might not be severe against him, but that his case under that aspect, might excite his most tender commiseration. A view of the passage, and the only one, it will be seen, that falls in with the absorbing nature, and the accumulating *interest*, which are impressively displayed to our notice, and that certainly characterises the supplicatory strain of Job from the very commencement of the chapter.

And with this exposition of the place, in its bearing on my purpose, I will barely note, that to what is urged agrees well the exclusive importance attached to the phrase or circumstance, *born of a woman*.* For as all know, that there is but one mode of gaining a personal existence on earth, it follows inevitably—in connexion with a moral taint or corruption of heart—that the uncleanness which is made to hang decisively on the *act*, is improperly reiterated in this manner; or held out by Job himself in that *very light*, if it have no influence at all, as some pretend in our day, in bringing about the disparagement in question.

The passage therefore, if I am not mistaken, as the one in Genesis, makes a propensity to sin coexistent with our introduction into the world.

Another testimony of unanswerable force, I shall derive from the fifty-first Psalm: and I will invite your serious attention, to its proper bearing on the subject of inquiry.

The Scripture contemplated, is a declaration of the Hebrew monarch. He says: *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*† A passage of inspiration, which is generally admitted by serious expositors, to teach the doctrine of original sin. And relating to our nature in any manner as inherently *defiled*, an unprejudiced mind might well exclaim, by what plausible trick can its seeming relation to that thing be explained away!

But in destroying its influence, on our views of moral depravity, some meagre evasion of its bearing is deserving, at least, a transient respect.

I remark then, that by the “iniquity” and “sin” re-

* Chap. xv. 14. xxiv. 5. † Verse 5.

ferred to in the passage, some insinuate thoughts of the psalmist, in regard to an illegality of birth; and such as would seem particularly, to reflect on the purity and correct deportment of his mother. But not to say, that a position of that nature should not be rashly taken up, it must seem in this instance to be an unnecessary, if not in plain truth, a free and wholly an infamous conjecture. In justice to his mother's character, it is made in the face of clearest presumption to the contrary; of *proof*, that presents her in an attractive light, as a child of the living God; and that warranted her own son, in pleading with unequalled ardor, his relation to such a female. He speaks of her, you will call to mind, under this aspect; saying, "I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds."* And in another place: "O turn unto me and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid."† And as this view of the passage, cannot with propriety be urged, it sometimes happens, that the advocates of it dispense with it entirely.

But when they have done so, what is the main shift, for doing away its light, in favor of original corruption?

It is common then to object to our belief, that by the "sin" and "iniquity" spoken of, may be intended, as by a figure, the cause being placed for the effect, barely, the *various ills*, to which we are naturally exposed in this depraved world. But as no such use of the terms, sin or iniquity is intimated in the context, or by the spirit of the whole psalm; I may declare, what is easily made evident—that it is uncommon in Scripture, to propose them in that *light*, unless they are actually, a legal manifestation of hatred toward transgression. It is not agree-

* Psalm lxxvi. 16. † Psalm cxvi. 16.

able to the style of the holy penman, where they occur in the very *relation* suggested. A view of the passage, as concerned with the psalmist himself, that in the room of doing away original sin, will plainly serve to cherish, if not to establish fully, the views we have adopted respecting it, both as imputed and innate.

It remains then, that the phraseology observed, have respect to his own experience; to the moral state and relations of David himself. And what bearing it has in a specific, and especially, a personal interest in its aim, is very clearly revealed to us, on his own part. He avers: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."* And with respect to the passage, I can only insist, that if the psalmist inculcates any thing; he teaches doubtless, that his whole frame, in the material of it, was in a fallen and ruined state. That from its first coherence, a death of some sort began to prey, not only on the body; but what was more fearfully true, upon its guilty and spiritual inhabitant. Nor has any thing imaginable been suggested on the topic, if I err not, which may serve to impugn that exposition of its import. For in whatever manner the original be translated, or the sense of it critically viewed, it certainly embraces—as any scholar in the Hebrew tongue must admit, and none can deny on the closest inspection—the whole duration, that is naturally taken up, in the formation and nativity of our being.

I may also subjoin, that no possible motive could have induced him to name these circumstances, except a more humble confession of his sinfulness before God. It is the only thing, which invited his regard. It is that

* "With a sinful nature (*my*) I was born, yea, even in my mother's womb I was possessed of it."—*Storr and Platt*.

alone, which had completely absorbed his soul. And having spoken of overt iniquity, in the preceding part of the psalm, it was natural enough, that like holy Job, he should retire within, and ponder the source from which it arose. And conscious for himself, on a faithful inquisition, that the force of inbred corruption was incalculable; and deeply aware, how *insidious* was its influence in counteracting the entirements to a godly life—he could not refrain from uttering it in his prayer. And while no other exercise of mind is displayed in that particular devotion, or accounts in any sort for what is presented; it will not escape notice, how well it accords, with what *follows* this assertion: with what is intimated by the psalmist, in relation to the “inward parts;” and an earnest aspiration of soul, that God would purge him “thoroughly from sin,” and perfect in his guilty heart, and by a renewed application to that end, an incipient and glorious work of renovating grace.

But dismissing *this* declaration of the psalmist, it may not be unimportant, perhaps, to look at the bearing of another; as intimating in respect to himself, that his own experience was by no means peculiar.

In the 58th Psalm it is declared: *The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.**

In this representation, which is one of no trivial magnitude, we may notice two things. First: it is said in respect to the wicked, that from the date of their existence on earth; even from the moment of their natural birth, they are unendowed with spiritual qualities. They are “alienated from the life of God”—the exact sense of the word *estranged*;† and are not only without,

* Verse 3. † Heb. נָחָה.

but in some manner are *bereft*, of a real likeness to their almighty Preserver. And in regard to this word, importing what I declare, you will notice particularly, as a secondary sense in sacred usage, that it conveys an idea of enmity; a certain disrelish of heart on the part of a sinner for the ways of God: and what is evidently true, in its largest extent, a fatal giving way, and an increasing propensity of mind, to an actual compliance with the temptations to iniquity. Again: it is affirmed, that after their birth, they are disposed immediately, to stray away from the path of divine requirement. And what does the psalmist truly convey by that? Whatever view is taken of it, it is clear to an ingenuous mind, that it is designed to be an exposition of the *fact* in question; or vindicate the imputation, under which a child is laid from the earliest *date*, of being unlike a gracious God, and possessing a temper, that invariably inclines it to the service of Satan. And, as designed to urge it on our notice, and for no other purpose too imaginable, it is the last use, it should ever be made to promote—the daring aim of literally explaining it all away! I am aware indeed, that much is said by an opposer of native depravity, about the absurdity of a child's telling a lie from its birth. But without dwelling largely on a thought which may naturally arise here, that a leaning to this vice, is a character, which renders a creature most unlike a Being “that cannot lie”; and likewise, it is rather by a figure of speech, a single instance is here put for a large expression;—it is enough to say, in accordance with the impression made on any unbiassed heart—that by sinning from that early period, is meant *simply*, what the nature of the case obviously requires, viz., from the earliest stage of life, whatever it may be,

in which are manifested an obliquity of *aim*, feeling, and ruling appetite in their infantile deportment. And as this period is early, as their activity is displayed, nay, earlier generally, than most of us are probably aware; it must be acknowledged, that the scripture I have adduced, gives a lively perception of the real, innate, and universal depravity of the whole human family.

With this exposition from the word of God, in respect to the corruption of our nature; and its derivation from the same stock, as far as implied in such proof, I shall desist: and not tax your patience in a view of this subject, by multiplying evidence of the same description. If what I have asserted, be according to the mind of the Spirit, it is enough; and the doctrine may be honestly considered, as clearly maintained in a scriptural manner.

Were it consistent with my plan, I could easily add much of decisive character, from other sources. Particularly, in the investigation of this subject, I could adduce the opinion of the Jews in a former age.* Also, every form of speech in which the point could be declared, that is found in profane authors, who have attempted to describe the character of the species.†

But I close what is offered at this time, with merely

* On this point, the reader may consult Edwards on "Original Sin." p. 485, et seq. I barely notice the I Book of Esdras, iii. 21, 22. It is worthy of attention. Says the writer: "For the first Adam bearing a wicked heart transgressed, and was overcome; and so be all they that are born of him. The *infirmity* was made permanent; and the law (also) in the heart of the people, with the *malignity* of the root; so that the good departed away, and the evil abode still."

† On this topic I am content with merely giving the following.

Heathens themselves have felt and acknowledged that they were depraved beings, and depraved, not by imitation only, but by nature; or as the Church of England well expresses it, by birth-sin. Hence, that celebrated saying, so usual among the Greek Philosophers *Συμφερον*

remarking—That nothing in the *training up* of children, contradicts what is taught in the sacred volume ; but confirms it, in reality, with a force of evidence that is singularly coincident.

In relation to that topic, as involving at first sight, a final appeal to observation, I will state ; that in spite of all parental control can effect, or, parental anxiety can supply ; in opposition to the unwearied kindness of superiors, and even studied concealment of their vices which is often practised, children manifest very early the marks of a depraved temper.

With regard to their behavior generally, it is morally certain, that if left to their own choice, they will copy an *evil* example in preference to a good one. Without any shewing to that end, or admonition to the contrary, the progress they make in this work is rapid. And the result of it, in designating the exact features of vice, as seen only in the power of “looks and gestures,” baffles all anticipation. In respect to relative ties and social obligation—suffered to associate together, it appears, that they soon fall into strife ; and passions of unearthly nature, yea, mischief devised within are

ἀνθρώποις το ἀμαρτανν, that is, moral evil is implanted in men, from the first moment of their existence. Plato goes still further, in his treatise *De Legibus* ; and directly affirms, that man, if not well and carefully cultivated, is *Ζωον ἀγριωτατον ὁποσα φναι γν*, the wildest and most savage of all animals. Aristotle asserts the same truth, and almost in the same words with Plato. The very poets asserted the doctrine of human corruption. So Propertius : *Unicique dedit vitium natura creato* ; that is, Nature has infused vice into every created being. And Horace observes, that youth is *cereus in vitium flecti* ; or, “admits the impressions of evil with all the ease and readiness of yielding wax.”—And why ? Let the same poet inform us. *Nemo vitii sine nascitur*. The seeds of vice are innate in every man.—*Toplady. Essay on Original Sin.*

mournfully displayed by them. If those mingle who belong to the same charge, we find that their selfish interests *will* clash ; and should one be at variance, perhaps, with a brother or sister, though literally “ bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh,” what coldness appears, and often an unforgiving temper ! And what is particularly offensive, as an act of singular enormity, in regard to those who bear, and who cherish them also amid severe trials ; very frequent is the case, that instead of appreciating their tenderness, by their hard thoughts, and ungracious conduct, they do often convey anguish to a parent’s heart. These are things of daily occurrence, and cannot escape the notice of a disinterested mind. And who, that has reared a family of children, exclaims not : How difficult to train up one child in the fear of God ! To guard it against the influence of the flesh and of Satan : to preserve it even from scandalous vice, and an immediate exposure to endless perdition ! How much toil, care, anxiety, restraint and discipline ; how many prayers, sighs and painful expedients are required to effect the purpose. And in the vexation of mind ; in the frequent, nay, utter disappointment which marks the best concerted effort, how deeply are we constrained to acknowledge that vice is an hereditary plague ; and according to the familiar proverb, that what is bred in the bone, will certainly exert an influence on the flesh, and manifest its vile and withering influence in all the affairs and relations of human life.

Consonant with this view, and worthy of respect is the testimony of Dwight. “ Children in the morning of life, (he intimates,) are unquestionably amiable ; more so, in many respects, than at any future period ;

that is, whenever they do not at some future period, become the subjects of sanctification. Some children also, we are taught in the scriptures, are sanctified from the womb. Yet even these in some degree, and all others in a greater degree, exhibit from the dawn of moral action, evil affections, and evil conduct. They are rebellious, disobedient, unkind, wrathful and revengeful. All of them are proud, ambitious, vain, and universally selfish. All of them particularly destitute of piety to God; the first, and far the most important exercise of virtue. They neither love, fear, nor obey him; neither admire his divine excellence, nor are thankful for his unceasing, loving kindness. Vast multitudes are taught these duties, from the commencement of childhood; yet they cannot be persuaded to perform them, by any species of instruction hitherto devised. A virtuous mind would, of course, from the mere knowledge of God; without any known law; without any other motive except what is found in his greatness, excellency, and goodness to us—admire and love, reverence and glorify Him with all the heart. But no instance of this nature can be produced. I have been employed in the education of children and youth more than thirty years, and have watched their conduct, with no small attention and anxiety. Yet among the thousands of children committed to my care, I cannot say with truth, that I have seen *one*, whose native character, I had reason to believe was virtuous; or whom I could conscientiously pronounce, to be free from the evil qualities mentioned above. In addition to this, it ought to be observed, that no child unspotted with sin, is mentioned in the records of history. This, I think, could not be, had the fact ever existed."



DISCOURSE VIII.

John iii. vi.—That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

In the last discourse, your attention was called to the influence of the first sin on mankind, viewed as inherent; or derivation by ordinary descent, of depraved appetite from the parent of the species. In discussing the subject, we considered particularly certain passages of Scripture; those which have a direct bearing on this topic, and whose import is clear, in respect to the particular end for which they are adduced.

Whether the testimony advanced, and it is but a bare example, teaches that the depravity in view is entire, importing an utter destitution of *holiness*, is not very material in regard to my object. As a qualifying circumstance however, if the fact is important, it can easily be proved by the whole scope of divine inspiration on the topic: for the oracles of truth describe our sinful race, as by nature, “turned aside, every one to his own way”—“having no fear of God before their eyes”—and as being “given up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to do those things which are not convenient;” and in words to the same effect. But it is comparatively useless, to urge the point in a formal array of evidence, as those who hold to original sin, are easily convinced, that its dominion over our nature is complete; and that nothing actually remains to the soul, in consequence of its wide spread contagion but a bare immortality.

If the discussion on the ground of scriptural proof be satisfactory, as well, as confirmed by the result of proper observation, I close what was designed with laying down

two or three propositions respecting it. And what is offered in this attempt, may be viewed, both as an inference from what is scripturally asserted, and at the same time, admitting of a more particular and ample developement.

1. First. From what is proved in the last discourse, I infer, philosophically speaking, that a propensity to moral evil is a *constitutional* propensity of our race.

By such a property of our moral frame, I do not mean to teach, that sin is infused into our *being*, in virtue of a judicial infliction: or, that in respect to its faculties, as pertaining in any manner to its own essence, *sin* is any thing more than an accident of the soul. But the point affirmed is simply this: that a natural tendency, bias, habit, or whatever you please to term it, is a co-existent principle of our very nature. It pertains, that is, to the first formation of it, not in a primeval state, but in a fallen state: and as a co-existent principle, irrespective of the particular circumstances, in which you can imagine it placed by God, will certainly lead on to sinful gratification.*

* The zeal which has been arrayed of late against the phrase *physical depravity*, as occurring in old writers, (adopting it in a particular sense in opposition to Arminianism,) is very singular: and most of all, that it should be garbled with to the admiration of thousands, who were wholly ignorant of its use in this manner; and prosecuted with such life by a class of men, who *profess* to embrace in substance, the very creed which they inculcated!

But to my own mind, it appears, on the whole, a perfect piece of logomachy; at least, as called up by those who professedly admit that almighty power is requisite to change the heart. Making all allowance for our ignorance of metaphysical causation, or keeping in the range of sober inquiry, it is easily perceived, that the quality of an action may be considered apart, either from the subject, mode, or the act itself. The sinfulness of an act arising from its illegality, may be viewed as

In taking this position, we are countenanced, as thought, by a kind of analogical reasoning, which on topics of this nature, is wholly unexceptionable. This, I should suppose, can be made very apparent. It involves merely one principle, viz., "That that propensity belongs to the nature of any being, which is a certain consequence of its nature, in the circumstances in which it naturally is." And what can be more obvious indeed, or even with the more captious, demand the immediate assent of an enlightened mind?

In applying this principle to any other subject of inquiry, we have no difficulty whatever in admitting its force. Take, for example, the properties of our nature which are confessedly constitutional. So far as they

foreign from the *action*; as certainly, no doubt, as many other qualities of acts performed by the soul which may be suggested: as much so, for example, as the qualities derived naturally from its simplicity, spirituality, incorruptibility, or any inherent attribute it may possess. The difference between the act of an agent, and the *sinfulness* of it, is shewn in a deranged person, who, in virtue of mental deprivation, may blaspheme his Maker: but while the act abides the same, as its opposition to law, in that instance disappears, the sinfulness of it no more exists. It may also be elucidated, though in a humble analogy, by a respect to material bodies, which daily retain qualities separable from their nature; as, for instance, the quality of heat in a man's hand, or in the atmosphere he shall inhale. But this may be quite sufficient.

It is hardly necessary to say, that the distinction between the act of any being and the sinfulness of it, should be retained for a very important purpose, viz., it may equally preserve the *independence* and *sacredness* of our Maker as concerned with the affairs of a corrupt race. For in regard to that concurrence in human events, which pertains to his providential rule, it follows in its proper bearing on the creature, that God is not the author of any act, viewed complexly, as a *sinful act*; but that the qualifying epithet, derives its existence and importance purely in a relative respect to law.

See Wesseli Diss. Acad. XX. de natura Peccati; et Wesseli Pref.

exist in that form, or operate with natural freedom, they are the same in all circumstances whatever. A fact, clearly developed, for instance, in the appetites of hunger and thirst ; the sexual inclination, a desire of society and the like. Such elemental principles of our nature, universally displayed by mankind, wherever they are, owe not their existence, or even properly their perpetuity, to any provision barely of time, place and circumstance. In the same manner, we affirm from most careful observation, that a tendency to moral evil, or an evil disposition of heart, is a natural principle of action with mankind. And with regard to its constitutional character, it is sustained on the same ground, in the one case as in the other. We judge it, then, deserving the appellation, because it operates precisely in that manner ; or if you please, with a like *spontaneity* of action, and an energy of display, that renders it difficult, I will not say to destroy, but even to *counteract* measurably its predominant influence. And while such tendency of our nature, as its necessary consequence in all circumstances imaginable, is called innate ; this very tendency or bias, viewed also, as a habit on our part opposed to the divine law, nay, what the law indisputably forbids—may be regarded at the same time, both as an inherent and blameworthy propensity to sin.

There is no objection, that I know of, which can be opposed to this train of reasoning, but what is philosophically fallacious ; and generally embraced, would subvert the nomenclature, of the most simple discourse in the offices of life.

To object in the manner of some, that such a disposition to sin is no principle of our nature, because the *fact* is not manifested strikingly on our birth, will not

answer the purpose. The same may be said of other principles of our frame, which are plainly constitutional ; and yet are not displayed till a subsequent period of life : and the reasoning employed in the one case, will be equally wise and appropriate in the other. Again : the same objection might be arrayed against every tribe of the animal creation, and every appetite or quality they possess, that is innate. In illustration of the fact, take any of them you choose. Behold the “ young lion” and the “ adder ;” some of them that are naturally poisonous, others that are equally voracious and cruel. And with respect to the detestable qualities they exhibit, I merely ask, if they appear so uniformly, from the first moment of their existence in the present world ? I trust that you will say—by no means. So far from it, some of them possess at the first, apparently no doubt, all the innocence, pliancy, and obsequiousness ; which, lamentable to think, in the judgment of discerning men, constitute in our day the perfection of moral virtue ! But nevertheless, are not these creatures, as the case shall be, in the primary tendencies that they ever manifest, poisonous or rapacious ? No doubt, you will reply. But how are they so ? We answer simply, because they possess a principle of *nature* ; one which is internal, fixed, and powerful in its operation, and that leads them invariably to adopt the course they pursue. So it is in regard to the human race ; for there can be no vestige of difference whatever in respect to this circumstance. They are subject doubtless, to the same laws with the whole animal creation, so far as constitutional traits are observed ; and the reality of their existence in the former, must be decided by the same general principles, which are fitly applicable to the latter. And if that be

admitted, and practically retained in thought, we can never doubt in the least, that men are born into the world with a certain propensity to vice.

Furthermore. It is a law of universal being, of the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, that every thing propagating itself, shall *produce its like*: a rule, from which it can never be proved, that there is the least departure, in the propagation of mankind.

But this principle, be it remarked, confirmed by every analogy that can be named, is opposed to an opinion which has been industriously circulated of late, viz., That the race are born into the world actually *pure*; and by some internal change, as it were, which nobody can well explain, nay—as unphilosophical in the production of it, as discreditable to the beneficent administration of Deity—we come to lose our birthright; and with a nature, strangely indeed corrupted, lie under the curse of an impartial God. And the ground on which it shews the falsity of it, if restrained merely to the result of observation is unquestionable. For nothing is clearer from that source, if we rely on that fully, than the solemn fact, that no vestige of real holiness is discovered among men, apart from the renewing grace of God; but that in the first trial of accountable agency, they discover a nature, utterly “alienated from the life of God.” And the point being capable of ample vindication, as shall appear, we can easily discern in regard to this law, what is the effect of it, in its bearing on the generation of the species. For to say nothing in the application, of nice sympathies, bodily and spiritual, which often exist between parents and their offspring, I may suggest in respect to it, what is invariably true—that no eminent virtue, which is not in the person of a parent, can be transmit-

ted by him to his children. Whatever his immediate charge may attain, or however they shall arrive at its possession, it cannot be in defiance of that principle. But in relation to the whole human family, as every child of Adam, is accounted to descend from a vile stock, and their offspring, therefore, sustain positively the same character; it is rightly said, that those, who, by nature are destitute of holiness, can only impress upon the souls of others, so to speak, the natural and reigning qualities, that they individually possess.

2. But in the second place. From what is proved on the subject of moral depravity, we may scripturally infer, that a presumption exists, in favor of express provision in the covenant of grace, even for the salvation of *infants*. It is not said at present, by any allusion of the kind, that all infants are saved; but that a merciful provision is anticipated, on the ground that they equally need the benefits it contemplates.

We are taught in the sacred writings, that if *any* are saved from final ruin, it is through a part, in the electing grace and purpose of Almighty God: and in this respect, if we can learn any thing on the subject, no ground of distinction between one and another shall ever exist. In the singular compassion of his heart, such individuals are *predestinated*, to be conformed to the image of his Son: and when that conformity is altogether perfect, they enter the mansions on high, only, as suggested in the gospel, under the name of a "purchased possession." But in executing his royal pleasure, or completing his people's conformity to Christ, it is believed in respect to the latter, that their vile *hearts* must be renewed, by the sanctifying grace of the Spirit; and through his personal inhabitation, working in them, that

which is well pleasing in his sight, shall be made meet, for the inheritance of the saints in light. But if there be a necessity for all this, which is as applicable to infants, as to those of maturer age; it is plainly on the footing, that the race, as such, is *fallen*. A ground, that we think, in the light of inspired testimony, is fully maintained, in what I have already offered to your pious observation.

But connected with this statement, we may look as supposed, for some kind intimation of restoring grace, respecting a portion of mankind dying in infancy: and according to the analogy of grace, may even justly presume—that some at least, of those dying without actual sin, and on whose behalf especially, the prayers of the church go up as incense, should be counted worthy of a part in the final glories of the Lamb.

And here, I may ask, what clearer testimony could be named of the fact, than is actually given us in the divine word?

In a proper answer to this inquiry, take for example, the case of infants among God's people, as presented to our notice under the economy of Moses. And in the provision of mercy, displayed under that dispensation of divine benevolence, I ask, if circumcision was not ordained expressly for their advantage? Surely it was. But what did it signify, to a child only eight days old? or if you please, to the faith of the parent, as connected formally with the spiritual welfare of the child? The apostle declares, that the ordinance was a "seal of the righteousness of saith;"* or, blessing of kind acceptance in law-judgment, as effected solely, through the imputed merit of an almighty Substitute. Nor was that all

* Rom. iv. 11.

of it. It signified not barely a change of *state*, but he adds in regard to it, that it was the sign of an inward and spiritual grace. It was a proper *symbol*, representing the influence of God's spirit on a regenerated soul. His words are impressive: "Circumcision is not that which is outward in the flesh, but is that of the *heart*, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God."* Now in the face of a statement so explicit, fully explained by our divine Master in relation to infants, testifying, "For of such, (or more exactly,) for of *these and such as these*, is the kingdom of heaven," or kingdom of grace under the present dispensation; I may ask—what sense surely is conveyed by it, if infants are not naturally depraved; and yet withal, certainly the subjects of distinguishing grace in the peculiar provision of the gospel?

But if such notice is found under the former dispensation, of what God graciously ordered for their advantage; I may add, as commensurate with it, in its bearing on this topic, that christian *baptism*, as applied by divine authority to infants, with any other impression, is quite nugatory. It is undoubtedly an unmeaning parade; or rather, an obvious and singular trifling with an august ceremony. And as such, you are aware, that it occasioned Pelagius himself, that renowned heresiarch of the 5th century, no small pain, in his controversy with the orthodox. Denying on his part, the corruption of man's nature by the fall, or its propagation by ordinary generation, he insisted strongly, that no mere infant was, or could be actually lost—but he would not profess in the mean time "to what place they may certainly go!" But in opposition to all this, I will aver, as con-

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

cerned chiefly with those who admit the rite in question ; that with such views, it is not only vain, if applied—but as connected with the administration of it, there is no ground for delaying it somewhat, that can fitly be pretended. Some evasion of the kind, it may be hinted, has been naturally thought of ; and even urged by some, who admit the ordinance seemingly in its widest extent, in order, that the subject might view it particularly in regard to *actual* sin. It is a thought very clearly, which was not un essayed by Pelagius : and by his followers ever since, it has been thrown out more or less in harmony with a doctrine of the Baptists, that infants are not qualified subjects of this sacrament : are not, for the reason that is commonly suggested, viz., that *faith*, as a personal quality, is required to a communion in any ordinance whatever ; and they are supposed to be incapable of exercising it in that period of their existence. But whatever is pretended on the topic, while we freely grant, that faith, as an *ordinary* rule proceeding, is a suitable preparation ; at the same time, it is well replied, to whomsoever it shall be applicable—that we may say of it, however, as Christ did of the eunuchs in respect to matrimony, to wit, That that saying or requirement, is intended simply for those *to whom it is given*.* And without dooming every child of Adam which dies in infancy, to remediless ruin ; and, as a thing of course, despising all reasonable ground of kind allusion to their case ; we may certainly hope, if all are not embraced in the election of grace, that God in his awful prerogative, at least, has compassion on many. That he will save them from the wrath to come, and has signified it too, in a manner exceedingly im-

* Matt. xix. 11.

pressive. And though incapable in early life, of appreciating on their part the end of their baptism, it is greatly consoling to the mind, that our Father in heaven, and in good consistency with what is intimated, can send his Spirit into their hearts as a *Spirit of faith*; can purge them from any stain of original defilement, and deliver their souls from every vile and destructive influence;—and in the execution of his gracious intent, with the tenderest emotion, can prepare their *hearts*, for the endless fruition of an inheritance, that was purchased for a world lying in guilt, at the expense of the Redeemer's agonies and death.

And with respect to this matter as an inference from what is already declared, be it carefully observed, that if what I have proposed from Scripture about those dying in infancy, conveys no encouraging notice respecting their final state; as far as the Bible is concerned, or indeed any other source of information whatever, we are left in midnight darkness. And whether they inherit a nature morally vicious or not, it will appear, that while a stern destiny entails on this class of our race a thousand ills, and even the anguish of a parting moment; their state in respect to future happiness, remains without a word of explanation, or kind regard, from the eternal Sovereign of the universe.

Once more. We assert, in view of what has already been exhibited on the subject of our discussion, that the equity of that dispensation, by which we are born into the world with a nature morally vile; is vindicated more certainly, by regard to a public relation to Adam, and the consequent imputation of his sin, than on any other principle whatever. If I err not, in a polemical manner it is capable of demonstration, that if sin be a

natural, as well as a moral evil, the difficulty pressing hard enough on any system, is greatly relieved by the thought—that that vileness, viewed as a natural calamity, may be considered in the light of a judicial infliction, and as flowing to mankind primarily through the channel of a public engagement.*

But to assert the principle in a most convincing manner, I must advert to the opinions of two or three distinct classes of people, about the state of infants on their birth; and the manner in which they appear, in regard to the views taken of their case, to reflect on the equity of the divine dispensations on earth.

And first. We may take up the matter, in reference to those who believe in an innate propensity to sin; but who, at the same time, as I think, very inconsistently deny the representative character of the first man.

In respect to those who embrace this opinion, the first thing arresting our attention is obvious. As it con-

* With that view, Stapfer: *Malum respectu nostri id dicitur quod nos statumque nostrum imperfectiorem reddit: cum vero malum morale sit vere malum sine statum sive corpore sive animæ imperfectiorem reddit.*—*Tom. I. § DXXVIII.*

To which I will subjoin, that the worst difficulty in regard to the introduction of sin into our world, lies back of any system of theology whatever. This fact should be deeply considered. It relates immediately to the incipient workings of it in Adam, so far as *man* is concerned; but more especially, to the manner in which sin becomes an element of the *moral system*. With regard to the latter point, I find the same difficulty in vindicating its appearance at all, whether its origin be traced purely, to the creative agency of God, and the precise plan he adopted; or more properly, to his providential rule, by which the original thought is practically executed. It comes obviously to the very same thing. In the former instance, if God could not create a world in which sin has no place, why did the Infinite Mind create any system whatever? Could he do it fitly, and pronouncing his own work "very good," unaffectedly delight in it? Or again, if, in his providential way

cerns then the disease, or ruined state of the species, they have in general, the same historical facts with us to explain; yet, as touching the equity of the divine plan, I think too, at an unspeakably greater disadvantage.

I say they have the same *facts*, in relation to a vindication of this thing, that press immediately upon us. In other words, they believe that according to a law of nature, God brings an infant into the world, with a propensity to moral evil. Respecting the law, by which it happens, he also is the Author of it. And with regard to the moral obliquity itself, implied in the fact—it is infinitely contrary to the nature of God, and to every principle of his righteous government. Under these circumstances, and to render the inconsistency the more evident, I ask—with what propriety is a man *born* with a vicious nature, apart from original sin, any more than

he could have kept sin from the present attempt, as I verily think, what should have *prevented* him from doing it? Was it not a point desirable in itself? And can any effect of sin, either natural or moral, be necessary to enhance the manifested glory of God? or, any thing beyond the perfect love and obedience embraced in the moral law, be required to promote the highest happiness of his creatures. These are very solemn queries. They are answered only by the *fact* that sin fearfully obtains: in a world which God himself has made; and which none but an almighty Agent can certainly uphold. Yet, admitting that sin has once gained an entrance, the difficulty attending its ravages is lessened, if it be viewed under a righteous constitution, as a penal infliction; and infinitely so, in my own apprehension, if its penal nature be actually requisite, unto a fair and triumphant vindication, of the divine displeasure against its evil desert.

With respect to the New-Haven dogma, that God is unable to create a world, in which sin (though incidentally,) may not be an *existing part*, see, *Views in Theology*. No. VIII: When an opinion so reproachful to the Author of being is seriously weighed, and I think, conclusively set aside.

Adam could have been justly formed, possessing the same attribute, irrespective of that very thing? How can the one be born, that is, any more than the other *created* so, I inquire, in a consistent view of the divine perfection? For none can reasonably pretend, that the bare mode of our entrance into the world, will make the difference; or clear up positively, the divine agency in one instance, more than in the other; when in either of the cases, the primary ground of the evil, is not to be ascribed, to a proper agency of our own? If there be therefore an insuperable difficulty here, without admitting a relation of some nature to Adam, in consequence of which the event takes place; I ask again—on supposition that it happens in virtue of our relation to him, if the fact however, imply no sin which is ours, at least *putatively*, and therefore set down to us in law-reckoning, how can the propriety of the measure be sustained? Deriving a corrupt nature from a remote quarter does not lessen its deformity, or make it less desirable to its possessor, than were it obtained immediately from his own parents. The proximity or remoteness of the source, that is, does not change its real complexion. Deriving by natural descent a moral taint, or a depraved temper of mind, you will equally perceive, I may intimate, in whatever way it be certainly accounted for—whether, for instance, from the desertion of God, or solely through an inordinate influence of the flesh—will not vary the case. For what I insist on simply, is evident at first sight, viz., if it come not upon us *purely*, as the reward of a probationary fault, that we are dealt with in a manner, wholly different from the first man. And the reason of it, will not be very distant from your unbiassed perception. For the corruption of his nature

by sinning, which was considered on a former occasion, it is agreed, as pertaining to his *fallen state*, formed a part of the penalty denounced by the law of God against transgression. And the infliction of it, as it happened, could not have taken place with him, till by some act of iniquity, he incurred the wrath of his Maker; and with the tokens of divine compassion, forfeited that tender influence, which he is pleased to exert upon the hearts of his unoffending children.

But to be somewhat more particular, in our attention to this topic.

If it be the will of God then, that all men have a trial on the ground of *merit*, with a view to obtaining eternal life, as we said, and the sentiment accord with the analogy of the divine dispensations; where, it is insisted, on the ground that men are born with a nature morally impure, do they secure the blessing? If they had no trial in our common parent; if they were not comprehended federally in his loins; in what conceivable manner, do they respectively enjoy a glorious privilege? In my own apprehension, it is very plain, that in their present circumstances, and with a nature spiritually diseased, they are wholly unprepared, even if a period were assigned them, to enter on such a trial. As I have suggested in a previous discourse—born without the image of the holy One, with no inward conformity to a law morally perfect, and even by nature, as destitute of *holiness* as Satan himself—the very thought of it must appear chimerical. And to say nothing of a “vile body,” by which the powers of the soul are enslaved to earth, and a depressing influence is exerted over the holy aspirations of it; it is presumable, that none will pretend in a near view of the subject, that our race, em-

barrassed in this manner, and dealt with strictly on a basis of good and ill-desert, can be tried in this fashion ; or if they were in fact, ever so long, can be said with the least propriety, under those auspices, to be really placed in an *original* probation.

And debating with those, who admit the corruption of man's nature by the fall, yet earnestly persist in denying representative agency ; I may *urge* in a certain respect, what has already been declared, viz., that the penal effects of the first delinquency do actually cluster upon all mankind.

I name the position, not merely as susceptible of proof, for I think it settled already, but as to its bearing on this topic, if you would know the full extent of it, it is judged that the race, even in infancy, and prior to any consciousness of crime, are certainly the worse for the fault of our progenitor. It can easily be proved that, antecedent to any actual guilt, they endure many evils springing immediately from that source. And without an induction of particulars, which may be intimated, I will remark in respect to it ; that whatever be the nature of the evils which are contemplated in our perception, whether they refer mainly, as some will have it, to "native pollution"—others again to "temporal death"—and others, perhaps, according to a late impression, to the bare "certainty of becoming sinners,"—is very immaterial. It is so, in respect to the particular end I have in view. For in whatever light it be regarded, it still remains a fact, that prior to actual ill-desert, the offspring of the first man, in a strict allusion to the penalty of sin, as we have fairly explained it, endure the painful desert of a primary and dreadful dereliction.

And conformed with this whole representation, yea,

evidently agreeing with it in the case of *infants*, I barely add, is the scriptural character of the new birth. Inheriting a depraved temper, if an infant in departing this life enters the gates of the celestial city, one thing, I am truly persuaded of—*It must be born again*.^{*} There must be a change, and that of a radical kind, in the character that it naturally exhibits. But in the case of such, as well as all others, it appears that the change, of which they are partakers, is a *moral* one: it consists plainly, in being renewed into the image of the Creator.† But the very mode of expression, “renewed in the *image of God*,” supposes evidently that they once possessed it: and the only manner in which it is lost, it is equally clear, is by a common trial in the person of our ancestor. A key of exposition however, which makes the loss of it, especially, as involving the deprivation of good, a *penal* dispensation. And with regard to the other evils, arising purely from the same source, while it disposes of them on the same principle, it opens a view of our present state, that can never accord for a moment, with a denial of representative efficiency in the trial of our first parents.‡

^{*} John iii. 3. † Col. iii. 10.

‡ I will add to the above, a very pertinent train of thought, from a discourse by GURSE.

To me it seems clear, that God's subjecting all men to such a dependence on the first man, that from him becoming morally unclean, they in the way of ordinary generation and descent would proceed unclean likewise, and derive a nature weak to good and prone to evil, far otherwise and worse than what himself had from God, and they should else have derived from him; that *this*, I say, necessarily implies in itself his being constituted by God the federal head of all his seed. Consequently then, God in suffering, on his sinning, this law and course of nature actually to take place in all men, even in the foresight of all the corruption which has since overspread the world, appears plainly to treat

But secondly. As some are sensible, that an innate propensity to sin, unattended by even the form of a trial, is difficult to explain on the principles of justice, they are inclined to adopt another position ; and to clear away difficulties, do resolve the calamity coming on infants in virtue of Adam's sin, barely into that of *temporal death*. But this, at the same time, as a natural step, in a half way persuasion of the doctrine inculcated, will merit at least a proper attention.

In relation to those who adopt this belief, they are far from admitting commonly, that the death in question is a legal infliction.† That, you may easily discover, will

them as having a legal interest in his transgression. Had they stood altogether on a personal foot, and been quite independent of Adam and his conduct, in point of relation to him as a common representative ; why should they not have the same advantages which God originally prepared and judged proper for the human nature, as much in case of his sinning, as if he had not sinned ? And could not God easily enough, notwithstanding Adam's sin, have secured to them these advantages, and provided for a more pure conveyance of their nature to them ? Might not a less extraordinary interposition at least, (as we may well suppose,) have prevented the bad influences of our first parents sinning on their offspring, than what has since been applied to remedy the evils, which have followed on the permission of them ? Nor can I see how the provision of a remedy, even as universal as the malady, (which yet cannot be proved to be the case,) solves the difficulty, as long as the constitution itself of human nature, is insufficient to prevent the malady ; and such it is at present, and has been ever since the fall, nor was it ever perfect and effectual to this purpose, but only in our first parents before they sinned—who are therefore most reasonably judged, both to possess and to change it under a common character and relation to all mankind.—*Berry-Street Sermons*.

† As indeed, the reader may call to mind, was strongly asserted by Dr. Taylor of Norwich ; who, admitting death in *consequence* of Adam's sin, urges it "only as a favor and benefit, and a fruit of fatherly love to Adam's posterity, reputed not as guilty, but wholly innocent."—Quoted by Edwards. *Original Sin*, p. 258 et seq.

With the above from Dr. Taylor of Norwich, agree the views asserted

not meet their expectation. Not regarding it properly as a *curse*, but rather, on the whole, as a kind discipline of Heaven ; they labor under an invincible necessity, of trying to persuade us, it is an admirable thing. And though it is often remarked of infants, particularly in regard to their departure from the world, that God can remove them without inflicting *pain*, and certainly the pungent distress of dying often a hard death ; and again, if it be only a dictate of mercy, it is not a natural way, of manifesting his kindness to the pure and accepted—it is all nugatory. They will argue at all hazards, that it may prove *negatively* in the sequel, a blessing to them. And in what manner do they tenderly assert it ? Simply this : because it may save a part of the whole race, viz., innocent beings, just formed by the hand of a kind Parent, from the chance of incurring hereafter, the awful displeasure of a benevolent Protector !

But to show the erroneous nature of the position, I may only observe, that death is the most terrible of natural evils by which we are assailed ; or that pertain to our condition, during our stay on the earth. It is something, that we look at from our earliest existence, and I may add, the whole animal creation also, with emotions of unqualified dread. And it is viewed not only in that light, but is a form of the curse, as we find in turning to the inspired page, ever most fatal in the hands of Jehovah ; when he has suddenly interposed, and expressed his displeasure against the vilest of mankind. Easily could we illustrate it from that source ; and from re-

by the *Christian Spectator* of New Haven. As far as can be seen, it is the same thing ; [the old scheme of "universal pardon"—that every Socinian in our country, and every latitudinarian, high and low, would most fervently reciprocate. See *Christian Spectator*, June, 1831.

peated judgments, name awakening instances of the fact.* And without adverting largely in respect to this topic, to the impression made on a renewed heart, by the testimony concerning Christ—that he not only toiled, but in the law-place of the sinner became obedient even unto *death*; it is very easy to perceive from the strain of such testimony, that it is never the style of the holy penman, to speak of most exquisite anguish, as inflicted by Heaven on beings perfectly pure; or without an immediate, and well deserving cause of these trying dispensations.

And viewing it, not only as foreign from the representations of Scripture, but considering too, as President Edwards remarks, that a bare *retrenching* of life, to say no more, is often made God's displeasure against sin, and required by the claims of unsparing justice; it is a singular token in favor of love to infants, that the Author of our being, can inflict upon them, without any trial whatever, such grievous maladies. Nay, if it be so, on supposition that they *are* tried, before the trial is ended, it must even appear, can break loose upon them in this surprising manner. Can deprive them with consummate ease of the expansion of their nature,

* As in the sinners of the old world; in the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, in Onan, Pharaoh, and the Egyptians; Nadab and Abihu, Korah and his company, and the rest of the rebels in the wilderness; in the wicked inhabitants of Canaan; in Hophni and Phinehas, Ananias and Sapphira; the unbelieving Jews, upon whom wrath came to the uttermost, in the time of the last destruction of Jerusalem. This calamity is often spoken of, as in a peculiar manner the fruit of the guilt of sin. Exod. xxviii. 43. "That they bear not iniquity and *die*." Levit. xxii. 9. "Lest they bear sin for it and *die*." So Numb. xviii. 22, compared with Levit. x. 1, 2. The very light of nature, or tradition from ancient revelation, led the heathen to conceive of death as in a peculiar manner an evidence of divine vengeance. Thus in Acts xxviii. 4.

Edwards, on Original Sin.

and the most exquisite sources of happiness on earth. And purely, from boundless compassion to their helpless state, yea, earnest care, lest in a hapless moment they lose his holy image, he finds it necessary, in respect to their situation, to perfect his glorious end in their existence, by immediately slaying them!

Such doctrine, I may remark, is not consonant with the monitions of natural conscience, any more than with the truth of the inspired record. And as an unaffected expression, in favor of its base absurdity; one that appears so truly, and will commend itself to an enlightened taste, I can name the inquiry of Eliphaz the Temanite. For remonstrating with Job, about the ground of the divine displeasure universally against human folly, he says: "I pray thee, whoever perished being *innocent*?"* or, entirely free from any blame whatever. His testimony is the more remarkable, from having occasion in the course of that debate, to speak particularly, of an ungodly world that had just been destroyed by a deluge. An event, no doubt, that swept off myriads of infants in the wide spread ruin. And to which he refers in that interview, very impressively, as you must have observed, saying, "Hast thou marked the old which which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, (or by a premature destruction,) whose foundation was overflowed with a flood?"†

Undoubtedly there is a cause, brethren, why that calamity overtook even them, who were not guilty of actual sin; and that will justify the divine dispensation, rendering it perfectly clear in the day of judgment. But it is not an act of arbitrary will; or obviously, a primary respect to the good of the subject. And any

* Job iv. 7. † Job xxiii. 15, 16.

explanation barely in that manner, can only subserve the end—as we find in some of the New-England states and in other parts of our land—of leading on very securely, to a denial of vindictory punishment hereafter ; and of promoting alike, the more rapid dissemination of a disguised and open infidelity.

Further. There are some that deny a representative connexion with Adam, who, finding it difficult to account for depravity by ordinary descent, or even the grounds of temporal death, are resolved to deny them both ; at least the former, under every aspect, and the latter as any part of the curse denounced against *sin*, and particularly against the trespass committed in the garden. And with regard to the new born infant, if we express their opinions exactly, they make him in the outset to be entirely from sin ; and whether besides, he have real holiness or not, as a moral agent in very early life, they suppose him prepared, with the dawning of accountable action, for a trial in a personal reckoning ; and in the certain result of it, to possess the only chance imaginable, on the ground of merit, for securing a blessed immortality.

But while this is the grand outline of it, according to the latest garb which the theory assumes in our day, we are apprised in a moment, of two astounding facts, viz., That all mankind, infants not excepted, have had a “sort of trial,” as expressed in the person of the first man : but at the same time, one of which we have apparently no credible account ; which it is therefore impracticable to describe ; and though last, not least—that in respect to any practical purpose whatever, had far better be discountenanced ! Again, in virtue of this trial, of which neither Scripture, nor reason is the ex-

plainer, it is absolutely fixed, strange as it may seem, that the first moral exercises of the creature will be sinful. Let the trial begin when it may—at any assignable epoch of childhood—the event is actually determined, and may be relied on beforehand, in every instance that may occur to the end of time. And here is a proper trial, it is affirmed, that all of the human family share in, through the matchless purity and condescension of their Maker!

Now with a trial professedly of this description, and promising nothing more, we are inclined to think, there is just ground before God, of maintaining a scriptural and lasting opposition.*

And first. I may glance at the *means*, by which the certainty of sinning in this manner is effected. This you will learn, by the very assumption, is the old scheme of Palagius; to wit, the influence of bad example, thought to set by the parents of the subject, or displayed by a corrupt society, exerting an influence on all about them.

But in our views of this topic, it is thought capable of strongest proof, that so far as mere example is named, a child, in a trial of this character, is often surrounded by more good than bad example, inviting its regard. If not the case in every instance, in some it is plainly;

* The reader is aware, that I have given what is called the New-Haven scheme of divinity; or, that view of things, which is cherished in the Athens of the New World! A full and detailed display of it, is found in the *Christian Spectator*—*Review of Barnes*. Where such a trial and a comparison of it with the old scheme appears; and I wish I could say, in the simplicity of manner that became an eminent servant of a humble Master, rather than the elaborate and jesuitical wire-drawing, that sets the apprehensions of ordinary minds wholly at defiance.

and certainly, in the very moment of beginning to exercise a moral agency on earth, I can safely infer, that it is not unfrequently a *fact*. And yet, how pure soever the character may be, which is offered to notice at that crisis, you will find at last, that a good example is generally slighted, and a bad one prevalently and easily acquired, in whatever pertains to an incipient influence, in the formation of moral character. Besides : what is more decisive in its bearing on this matter, anterior to the influence of particular examples, either good or bad, children at an early period, manifest a wicked conduct ; which in given circumstances, cannot be accounted for, but in a single regard to innate depravity. Without a sample of their character, they are guilty of many acts, which are very offensive in the sight of Heaven. As the Psalmist declares, and the example is a common one, they can tell a lie in order to effect a purpose, and then, are very ingenious in devising ways by which they may conceal it. And many foibles are they guilty of, as they are frequently styled, which cannot escape the eye even of the most careless observer, and that are not derived invariably, through the medium of any demoralizing example

And not only in regard to *overt* acts of sin, but I will urge especially, the evil passions of our nature ; the pride, selfishness, hatred, envy and revenge displayed in their conduct ; and discoverable too in their earliest experience—there is much indicating an evil temper. On a narrow inspection, the diversified *aspect* they assume, admonish us clearly of their inbred power : and that, as qualifying our state, they are unquestionably, not any thing more or less, than squalid streams, proceeding directly from an infected fountain. Some il-

illustration of the fact, I may remark, is given by Augustine in respect to *anger* ; where speaking of its influence upon our nature—and that in very early life—he names in particular two infants, born actually at one birth, that fought or contended with each other, upon their mother's breast !—And not a trifling example, for one of scriptural propriety, is that of Cain, a renowned character in the family of the first pair. A prodigy of vice in various aspects, we can safely say, of *envy* at least, he is a fair model. And though he had confessedly passed the period of infancy, which is not material in this instance, we are told, that because “ his own works were evil ”—all that was necessary—he rose up against his brother Abel, and in a fit of rage, without a precedent even in the wide spread universe, he cruelly deprived him of his natural life.

But without extending a train of thought, which I had nearly said, is superseded by familiar incidents of life—I will dismiss any thing of this description, and remark

Again. That not only the point I have contemplated, but in regard to our *state* on the earth, the circumstances generally, under which the supposed trial takes place, wears a very improbable aspect.

As connected with a trial on the theory contemplated, it is not a vain imagination, I will observe, that in the infancy of being, we have a “ sentence of death ” in ourselves, through which we are *mortal*. That we possess a body that is infirm, and from the first moment, of our personal stay on the earth, is liable at every stage, to sharp disease, and to a final dissolution. Nay, what is worse than all, that in consequence of its present state, the body we inherit, exerts a sad influence on the kind-

liest exercise of the soul ; and so far as its influence may go, which is not diminutive, chains it down fearfully to a sordid gratification of time and sense. Yet, in harmony with the fact however, in regard to a child thus put upon trial for his life, you must not forget, that his *residence* is not in Eden. So far from that, he enters a world which God Almighty has cursed, and with its infantile breath, cannot turn an eye in any direction, where the fact is not touchingly displayed. Look where he may, in consequence of a terrible destiny, the earth is filled, not barely with anxious toil, which were comparatively light, but with dire *calamity* and disappointed expectation. And glancing at the various ills, which arise directly or indirectly from the apostacy ; which pertain to the body or the soul, are real or imaginary ; they are such at any rate, in the mysterious providence of God, as have changed the earth, from being the garden of the Most High, into what may be termed, with infinitely more propriety a complete lazaretto.

Now I ask, if a nature such as I have named, and the circumstances palpably in which it is placed, to say nothing of the prevailing influence of depravity throughout the species, correspond with any view that we may form of a primary probation ? In my own impression, the reply is justly made, that every thought of it, is absolutely forbidden in a simple regard to the facts I have suggested.

And finally. Not only the means, by which the certainty of sinning is secured, and the circumstances generally, under which the trial takes place, present nothing in favor of it ; but I will add, there is nothing positively in the *result* of this trial, its bearing on the welfare of the subject, that renders it any more desirable, than a responsible relation to the parent of mankind.

With regard to this point, I cannot but observe on the one hand.—While this trial supposes that there is no natural cause of failing altogether, or at least, pretends so in the premises; it is an historical truth, and must spring from an existing cause, that all who are put on trial in this manner certainly rebel: and contrary to any analogy of the divine dispensations, where many are tried separately on the same plan, not only fall away; but for any assignable period, it may be predicted in the face of mere man, that not one in a million, will retain his integrity for a single day. And to suppose a faculty for obeying the divine will, with a fair hope of triumphant success, should be attended with a result universally disastrous and shameful—cannot agree with any idea we can form of a probation, that shall make it ever, in its primary aim, an object of divine complacency and regard.

Again: while the result of this trial in every instance is fatal, as relates to a vindication of *divine* agency in it, it matters not from what cause the failure arise, in its bearing on our welfare, in case it shall be entirely beyond our control. It matters nothing, for example, whether it is from inherent depravity, or something *else* inherent; or, whether it flows immediately through our external relations. It is an idea, I would urge distinctly upon your notice: for I will not disregard it, indeed, respecting the former suggestion. I say, touching the inherent *cause* of defection. For some in their zeal against physical depravity, which no one stands up for, appear to lose sight of it. And in speaking of a trial, that we have on their own scheme, are very inconsistent in this respect. While a physical *obstacle* pains them exceedingly, though existing barely in imagination; they are really forced, however inconsistent with their object, to

intimate a physical *weakness* : something at least, which makes a distinction between man, and other accountable agents—rendering the apostacy of our race upon trial previously certain.*

But on the supposition that there is nothing *within*, if there be aught in the case, in other aspects, which makes a failure actually certain ; it is quite indifferent, as respects our happiness, if placed entirely beyond our disposal.

In regard particularly to the relations we sustain to spiritual beings, as the principal fact arising from that source, is the influence which God himself exerts im-

*“ I also believe that such is the *nature* of the human mind, that it becomes the occasion of universal sin in men in all the appropriate circumstances of their existence, and that therefore they are truly and properly said to be sinners *by nature*.”—*Doct. Taylor, of New-Haven.*

A proper comment on the above declaration of Taylor, may be worthy, in my view, a particular observation.

The first question to which I solicit your notice in regard to this passage, respects the meaning of this statement, that the nature of the mind is the occasion of its sinning. Is it that its powers and susceptibilities are the occasions of its sinning, in distinction from, and irrespectively of the moral influence under which they are exerted ? If so, wherein does his theory on this subject differ from the doctrine of physical depravity respecting the cause of our sinning ? Or how is to be reconciled with his belief, that “ regeneration is a moral change ” simply, and “ that the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit ” in it, “ results solely from the *voluntary* perverseness of the sinner’s heart ? ” How can it be that the nature of the mind is the sole ground of its sinning, and its voluntary acts the sole ground of its need of the Spirit’s regenerating influences ? If its nature is the occasion of its sinning, what have its circumstances to do in determining the nature of its moral acts ? If its nature is the occasion of its putting forth the choices, which it does when it sins, is not its nature likewise the occasion of its exerting the acts which it does when it obeys,—and may it not therefore be as “ truly and properly said ” to be obedient “ *by nature* ? ”

In the next place, I take leave to inquire, whether men ever exist in circumstances that are not “ the appropriate circumstances of their ex-

mediately on the safety of the soul ; I ask those, who insist on a trial of this description, what advantage they hold out, to the prejudice of a trial in the first pair ? If they say, that the state of Adam, in respect to gracious qualifications, was painfully *destitute*—what is gained truly on this plan ? Are the stern features of that dispensation, as conjectured, measurably softened ? A reply to this query presents a gloomy picture. For while the child which is put on trial for himself, is perfectly *sinless*, it is confessedly a subject of grace, as much as Adam himself. And if that be allowed, it makes no difference, whether it be inwardly *holy* or not. If we can suppose it, for instance, formed without a bias to good or evil, it is thus far, like a scale exactly poised : and easy is it for God, and nothing easier imaginable, than to turn the scale in favor of moral happiness. And it will certainly occur too, in suggesting the thought, that if the child is born with a relish for holiness, the fact is

istence ?” And if they do not, whether all the circumstances in which they exist, are occasions of their sinning ; or whether in other words—as the passage must then mean,—they never exert any obedience ? If they do not, what then becomes of the doctrines which Dr. Taylor professes respecting election, atonement, regeneration, perseverance ? If men ever do exist in circumstances that are not “ the appropriate circumstances of their existence,” who is it that places them in those circumstances ; God, or themselves ? And which, or what are they ? Are they as the passage must then imply—those in which they yield obedience ? What then is it that constitutes the inappropriateness of those circumstances ? A change of their *nature* ? How can that be a circumstance of their existence ? Is it “ the suspension of the selfish principle ?” How can that be a circumstance, or at most an *inappropriate* circumstance of their existence ? Is it then the influences of the Holy Spirit ? But can it be an inappropriate circumstance for men to enjoy his renewing influences ? What answer can be returned to these inquiries, that can give to the passage any adaptation, to allay apprehension respecting his doctrines, or demonstrate that he is not introducing erroneous sentiments into the churches ?—*Views in Theology, No. X.*

still more animating. For a habit of conformity to the divine will, if it exist for any time, may render its case in that light, very obviously I can think, even more eligible than that of our ancestor. But notwithstanding this animating view of the whole affair, desirable as it may be in itself—*God withholds that influence*. He leaves the child in this period of being to make his own way. And though he could easily prevent it, in the certain issue of it, it happens, that falling away universally from their state, the whole race become subject to his frown and everlasting indignation.

But while the failure takes place in the one case, as certainly as in the other, and in regard to its bearing on human destiny, or historically viewed, it is immaterial which, if the cause is really without our influence; I may add, that the worst of it remains undoubtedly to be disposed of. For while this is true, in respect to the two schemes, as concerned with a vindication of the fact—or its connexion, with the equity of the divine administration in this world—there is a vast disparity between them. There is clearly in regard to the offspring of Adam, or manner in which they are presented to notice. It appears so unequivocally in this light. For while in one case, the creature is born in a state of condemnation; in the other, he is perfectly innocent. On one plan, therefore, he cannot expect a saving influence; on the other, he may fitly anticipate it. And while in one instance, the withholding it, is wholly a matter of justice, and based on the acknowledged principles of government; in the other, it is plainly an act of *mere* sovereignty. And viewed in the latter light, so far from satisfying the complaining and openly vicious of mankind, I greatly mistake, if it be not foreign from any con-

ception they form of the divine character; and would be considered by them invariably, both as false in theory, and if practically acknowledged, a most partial and unpitiful display of almighty prerogative.

With these remarks on the subject generally, which has claimed your attention in the previous discourses, and what relates particularly, to the ruinous effect of the apostacy, I commend the whole to your favorable regard. If what I have advanced be in harmony with inspired evidence, it will have a place in your devout meditation; and may serve, I hope, to enlarge your views of the divine character, and strengthen your insight, into the purity and grandeur of the divine dominion.

But in commending a subject of this fearful nature to your serious notice, I feel constrained to close what is laid before you in this manner, by simply warning you against a prevailing error: one, that operates sadly, in diverting the mind from things of practical interest; and exciting too in the breast, feelings, that are wholly unbecoming our fallen state. Speaking plainly, it is the discussion of these awful realities, in a spirit of self-reliance and extravagant zeal; a point that is sadly overlooked, and if I am not deceived, a disregard of which eminently characterizes the *productions* of our day. If there be a subject that we should approach with a subdued feeling, and a tender sense of religious awe, it is that I contemplate; it is the mournful tale that accounts for the death and moral condemnation of the species. In these inquiries we should certainly feel, that the exposure of a single soul to the wrath of God, and the miseries of the damned eternally, is a subject of painful remark; but the man who dwells upon this theme with lightness; who can even refer to these top-

ics with a temper bordering on disdain or ridicule, whatever thought he may entertain of his own case, is a daring offender in the sight of God. And though he were even to discard those qualities—could speak feelingly of these matters—or reason wisely concerning them, as if to scan the ways of Providence ; if he do it leaning to his own understanding he is still far from his sphere ; and it should never be lost sight of, that he is actually pronounced in the sacred writings a *fool*.

Let us beware then, of the disposition with which we treat these solemn intimations. As those who have revolted from a gracious sovereign, and who are conscious of crime, let us look at them with deep self-abasement of feeling. Let us speak of them with the meekness and lowliness of mind becoming a little child ; and with a lively sense of our fallibility, in communicating even our clearest discoveries of truth. And praying unceasingly, for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, that we may comprehend what relates to our welfare, so far as it is freely given us of God to know ; while we cherish a becoming sense of our ignorance and real imperfection—are tenderly admonished that we see only through a glass darkly—let us, by all means, in a particular respect to the sacred Oracles, be very thankful for the light we have already acquired. That while on the one hand, it shall lead us on to higher attainments in a knowledge of these radical considerations—from the views already advanced, as unfolding the purity of Jehovah, and the equity of his dealings with our race, we may not only add to our faith *knowledge* ; but I would trust, in a very tender frame, may derive a portion of that spirit displayed by blessed Paul ;—when when recounting the “mystery of God,” as revealed

not barely in our ruin, but particularly in our recovery by the atonement—he exclaimed with a feeling of rapturous amazement: “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his JUDGMENTS, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompenced unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

ERRATA. IN SOME COPIES.

Page 15, first line, for onset, read *outset*.

Page 118, 10th line; for, and in the case, read, *as* in the case.

Page 200, 20th line, read, rule *of* proceeding.

Page 193, last line, for important purity, read, *importance purely*.

